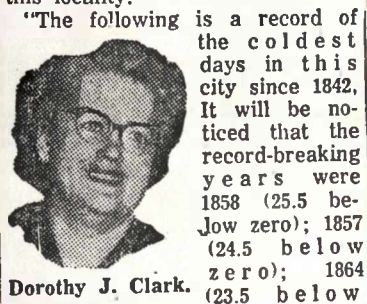


Coldest Days In the Past

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

We are indebted to Edward Gartrell, 940 North Eighth street, for the following interesting account of early Terre Haute weather. Over the years, he has collected much historical material pertaining to this locality.



Dorothy J. Clark.

The following is a record of the coldest days in this city since 1842. It will be noticed that the record-breaking years were 1858 (25.5 below zero); 1857 (24.5 below zero); 1864 (23.5 below zero), and 1884 (21 below zero), since which time we have had no very excessively cold weather:

- 1842—Feb. 18, 4 above.
- 1843—Feb. 1, 2 below.
- 1844—Jan. 29, 3 above.
- 1845—Dec. 2, 10 below.
- 1846—Dec. 28, 7 below.
- 1847—Jan. 11, 9 below.
- 1848—Jan. 10, 6 below.
- 1849—Feb. 19, 7 below.
- 1850—Feb. 19, 1 above.
- 1851—Jan. 11, zero.
- 1852—Jan. 19, 11 below.
- 1853—Feb. 19, 8.5 below.
- 1854—Feb. 23, 4 below.
- 1855—Feb. 26, 4 above.
- 1856—Jan. 10, 25.5 below.
- 1857—Jan. 19, 24.5 below.
- 1858—Feb. 23, 12.5 below.
- 1859—Dec. 23, 12.5 below.
- 1860—Jan. 2, 10 below.
- 1861—Jan. 30, 3 above.

- 1862—Jan. 16, 2 above.
- 1863—Feb. 3, 1 below.

Many Frozen To Death.

1864—Jan 1, 23.5 below (this was the terrible New Year's Day when so many persons were frozen to death.). There was no record kept from 1865 through 1868.

- 1869—Dec. 28, 8 above.
- 1870—Dec. 24, 13 below.
- 1871—Dec. 21, 2 below.
- 1872—Dec. 21, 14 below.
- 1873—Jan. 29, 16 below.
- 1874—Jan. 15, 2 above.
- 1875—Jan. 9, 14 below (there were several other very cold days in 1875).

- 1876—Dec. 9, 8 below.
- 1877—Jan. 4, also Jan. 9, 4 below.
- 1878—Dec. 3, 16 below (there was a great deal of severely cold weather this winter. On Dec. 10 it was 12 below, on Dec. 23, it was 8 below).

- 1879—Feb. 14 and 15, 2 below.
- 1880—Dec. 29, 14 below (there was nearly a week of very severe weather).

- 1881—Jan. 1, 2 above.
- 1882—Dec. 9, 8 below.
- 1883—Jan. 22, 4 below.
- 1884—Jan. 5, 21 below (this winter was noted for its terribly cold weather).

- 1885—Jan. 22, 17 below.
- 1886—Feb. 24, 8 below.
- 1887—Dec. 29, 1 above.
- 1888—Feb. 9, 1 above.
- 1889—Feb. 23, 1 above.
- 1890—No record.
- 1891—Feb. 4, 2 above.
- 1892—Jan. 20, 5.5 below.
- 1893—Jan. 6, 1.7 below.
- 1894—Jan. 25, 6.6 below.
- 1895—Feb. 8, 18 below.

Old Papers Reviewed.

On consulting the old newspapers of one hundred years ago, I found the following mention of weather conditions. In the "Daily Union," I. M. Brown, editor and T. B. Long, associate editor, I found these interesting items.

"It appears that our winter has just set in. On Friday last we had cold winds, which continued up to Saturday, and from that time up to Monday morning, we had quite a freeze. It commenced snowing quite rapidly on Monday and continued throughout the day. A few more days more of such weather will give us plenty of ice, which we have been rather fearful would be scarce during the next season."

About two weeks later on in the same early newspaper, I found this statement. "Our ice merchants are now putting up ice that is about ten inches thick. Luther G. Hager, our efficient and energetic ice merchant, informs us that he has already put up four hundred tons of ice. With such progress our citizens need not lament any longer over the prospect of a want of this luxury."

Plenty of Sleighing.

By Washington's Birthday the "Daily Union" reported that "we have extremely cold weather now. Plenty of good ice, sleighing, etc. For the past few days there has been the finest sleighing that we have ever had in Terre Haute for many years. The streets have been literally crowded with sleighs of all sizes and descriptions, running in every direction, filled with Vigo's fairest daughters, who are always on the right side of their gentleman escorts . . ."

Another note of interest was that the snow between Alton and Mattoon in Illinois was sixteen inches deep. Ice on some of the local roads was one to one and a half inches thick. Wouldn't automobiles have had a time in those days?

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Wla-K. Dorothy J.
T. H. Trib-Star 8/14/66

1864 Publication Advises Farmers on Keeping Cool

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

Farmers were reading a publication called American Agriculturist in 1964 and learning about keeping cool very good advice at all times, but particularly timely when the thermometer marks 100 degrees and upward in the shade, as it has this summer in Terre Haute.

Housewives were advised that since hot weather brought busy days, they should "get as much of the house work as possible done in the cool of the day."

Some of the 102-year-old household hints went like this; "Sponge the bread at night, that it may be ready to mold into loaves in the morning, and do other baking at the same time."

If you have washing to do, soak your clothes over night and boil them up in the morning, after a partial rubbing for clothes much soiled, or use erasive soap and a spoonful of sal-soda in the boiling suds to save a great deal of rubbing. Remind your husband that a good washing machine and wringer would be acceptable as soon as he can afford it."

"When baking or washing is to be done, provide beforehand for breakfast that it may be prepared with little trouble. If the baby keeps you awake nights, go to bed early. Nature exacts severe penalties for violated law."



DOROTHY J. CLARK

Iron After Tea

"Clean floors in the morning and iron after tea. Put your house in order immediately after breakfast and before retiring at night. Begin to think about next winter's comfort and so always have knitting or something ready for leisure moments."

This farmer's publication contained several "new" recipes of that year of 1864, but one in particular caught my eye . . . Popcorn Pudding! Here is how it was made.

"Crush popped corn with a rolling pin on a table, and then grind it into coarse meal in a common coffee mill. In a mill of large size, it may be ground at once without rolling.

One pint of corn will make about sixteen pints when popped and this will measure about eight pints when ground. To make the pudding, mix five pints of the meal with four pints of sweet milk. Place it where it will warm slightly and let it soak an hour or two.

Then let it cool and add two eggs, sugar, raisins and spice as for a rice pudding. Set it on a hot stove and boil a few minutes, stirring it several times to get the meal well mixed with the milk.

Then bake it about an hour, and serve while hot. Popcorn Pudding was highly commended for good flavor, healthfulness and it's easy

recipe.

Plans Noted

Getting back to the subject of keeping cool in hot weather, the editor of the paper found it "amusing to notice different plans men have tried for this purpose.

One sits by an open window where the hot blast comes from the dusty street, fanning himself furiously, fuming and fretting at the heat, and making himself still more uncomfortable by often looking at the thermometer."

"Another one is trying the experiment of fighting fire with fire, by drinking punch and juleps to heat his blood and thus keep cool! But right across the way sits a man who does not appear to know what the weather is.

He is so busy with his work that he thinks of nothing else, and so the heat makes little impression on him. He knows the secret of keeping cool — to think about something else."

"This rule will apply under all circumstances calculated to excite a man and make him uncomfortable. It is related of a sportsman that for years he was unable to shoot a bird because of his nervous haste when he discovered any game.

At last a friend told him to always stop and take a pinch of snuff before firing and by thus "thinking of something else" for a moment, he became cool, and seldom missed a shot. The mind should be master of the body and it may become almost absolute in its control by proper training."

The editor began to get really carried away with his theory of beating the heat when he expounded further. "Would it not be an excellent arrangement, if by some means we could save some of the excessive heat of summer, to use in winter?

A story is told of a simple-minded farmer who used to open his barn doors wide every hot day to gather sunshine for cold weather, and you may smile at his folly. But a perfect plan has been arranged by the Creator for doing this very thing.

The food we eat, the clothing we wear and the fuel by which we are warmed in winter, all come from the influence of sunshine. It is a remarkable fact that every stick of wood or other combustible will give out in burn, just as much heat as was required to produce it.

The trees and plants are all storing up sunshine to give it out again in some form for the use of man. The amount of strength derived from a pound of corn eaten as food, is just equal to the force

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which the heat required to produce it would give out.

If that heat would make steam enough to raise 100 pounds to a certain height then the man who eats and digests the corn will have just that amount of power added to his body.

It ought to reconcile us to hot weather to remember that it is really the harvest time of power, in which the earth is gathering and storing up a plentiful supply of future life and vigor for all creatures . . ."

Whether this inspires my readers to go out and "store up energy" in the hot sun, or seek an air conditioned room to "keep cool" remains to be seen!

Earthquakes of 1811 Were Felt Over Ohio Valley

Clark, Dorothy By DOROTHY J. CLARK

The Battle of Tippecanoe was fought on the 7th of November, 1811, and on the 4th of December, William Henry Harrison wrote that "the frontier never enjoyed more perfect repose . . ."

During this year two events took place beside the battle which makes it especially noticeable in the history of the West. One was the building of the steamer "New Orleans," the first boat built west of the Alleghenies. The other was the series of earthquakes which destroyed New Madrid and affected the whole Mississippi Valley region.

According to a graphic eye witness account, the center of the earthquake was thought to be near the Little Prairie, 25 or 30 miles below New Madrid. The vibrations were felt all over the Ohio valley as high up as Pittsburgh.

The first shock was felt during the night of Dec. 16, 1811, and was repeated at intervals with decreasing violence into February. Since New Madrid suffered more than any other town on the Missis-



DOROTHY J. CLARK

sippi River from its effects, it was considered nearest the site of the earthquake's beginning.

An eye witness who was about forty miles below that town in a flat boat on his way to New Orleans with a load of produce when the great earthquake began described the horrible disaster.

The first shock took place in the night while his flat boat was tied up along the banks of the Mississippi in company with several others. At this time there was still danger from the southern Indians after the battle of Tippecanoe and for safety several boats kept together for mutual defense in case of attack.

In the middle of the night

there was a terrible shock and jarring of the boats. The crews awakened and hurried on deck with their weapons of defense in their hands, thinking the Indians were rushing on board.

The ducks, geese, swans and various other aquatic birds in great flocks quietly resting in the eddies of the river were thrown into a panic and with loud screams sounded their alarms.

The noise and commotion sooned hushed and since nothing could be seen of Indians or any sign of danger, the boatmen concluded that the shock was caused by the falling in of a large mass of the river bank near them.

As soon as it was barely daylight the crews made ready to depart. Directly a loud roaring and hissing was heard, like the escape of steam from a boiler, accompanied by the most violent agitation of the shores and tremendous boiling up of the waters of the Mississippi in huge swells rolling the waters below back on the descending stream and tossing the boats about so violently the men couldn't keep their footing.

Banks Swallowed Up

The sandbars and points of islands gave way and were swallowed up in the river which was running upstream. The cottonwood trees, cracking and crashing, tossed their limbs to and fro while they disappeared beneath the flood.

The water of the river, which the day before was quite clear and rather low, changed to a reddish hue and became thick with mud thrown up from its bottom. The surface was so churned up it was covered with foam. The earth on the shores opened in wide cracks and closing again threw the water, sand and mud in huge jets higher than the tree tops.

The air was filled with a thick vapor or gas which looked like a purplish haze or smoke. The sulphurated gases that were discharged during the shocks tainted the air with their noxious fumes, and so strongly polluted the water of the river to a distance of 150 miles downstream that it could not be used for any purpose for several days.

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From the temporary check to the current caused by the heaving up of the river bottom and the sinking of the banks and sandbars into the river bed, the river rose five or six feet in a few minutes

and rushed forward with even greater power.

Many Boats Lost

The horror-struck boatmen cut their boats loose, believing there was less danger on the water than from the falling river banks. Many boats were sunk in this way and their crews perished with them.

It required much effort and skill to keep the boats in the middle of the river as far from the shores, sandbars and islands as possible. Many boats were wrecked on the snags and old trees thrown up from

the bottom of the Mississippi while others were sunk or stranded on the sandbars and islands. The scenes which occurred for several days during the repeated shocks were horrible.

The most destruction took place in the beginning, although the shocks repeated for many weeks, they became lighter and lighter until they died away in slight vibrations like the jarring of steam in an immense boiler.

New Madrid, which stood on a bluff fifteen or twenty feet above the summer floods sank so low that the next rise covered it to a depth of five feet. The bottoms of several fine lakes in the vicinity were elevated so as to become dry land and were later planted to corn. Reelfoot Lake in Tennessee, popular with present day boating enthusiasts, was created by the Great Earthquake of 1811.

Earthquake of

1811

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Moonwatchers in City

Watch 1869 Occultation

Tim Trib-Star 8/3/69
By DOROTHY J. CLARK

On Saturday, August 8, 1969, scientific men gathered here from all parts of the state. The "New York World" sent a correspondent here, George L. Frankenstein. The "Indianapolis Journal" sent E. W. Halford. Jno. H. Holliday represented the "Indianapolis Sentinel," and among other scientific men, Prof. Moore, Prof. Robert R. S. Bosworth, Prof. B. C. Hobbs and others were present.

The cause of this gathering at Terre Haute was the fact that this city was within the limit of total obscuration, and hence was a most eligible point from which to view it.

The day dawned with a cloudless sky. All the elements were most favorable. Observations were taken at several places in the city, the main place being on top of the old Female College building, now St. Anthony's Hospital. Here the correspondents and other distinguished visitors were located.

Precisely at 4:16¼ p.m. the first contact was made, and the moon passed slowly over the face of the sun from north to south. The landscape began to darken, the cows began to wend their way home, and the chickens sought their roosts. Venus soon came out a little way from the sun and the moon and then one by one the stars appeared.



Dorothy Clark

Suddenly at 5:15¼ p.m. the acme of occultation occurred. The moon stood out black and distinct, surrounded by an aura of surpassing beauty. The darkness at this time far exceeded anticipations. It became necessary to light the gas fifteen minutes before the total obscuration. The mercury fell, and a cool evening breeze blew from the northwest. The total eclipse lasted exactly two minutes and twenty seconds.

Two weeks before the event the "Daily Express" reminded its readers of the coming event "the only total eclipse of the sun since 1834 which could be observed in any considerable portion of our country, and no other total eclipse will be visible over the northern part of this continent."

About a week before the happening, the "Indianapolis Journal" suggested that since Terre Haute was to be in the belt of total observation, an excursion to that city to return after dark "might be made a pleasant thing for the excursionists, and profitable to the person getting it up. Here the obstruction will cover about 23 out of 24 parts of the sun's disc."

Our local editor reassured his readers with this comforting thought: "The idea that the interception of the Sun's rays when eclipsed produces any considerable chilliness is quite imaginary. . . . So we need not look for any opportunity for replenishing our ice houses from the congelation

that will follow or expect that vegetation will be nipped by frost during the obscuration of next Saturday evening."

On August 5th the "Daily Express" stated: "This eclipse will be total nearly the entire length of southern Indiana. As it passes out of the State its western limit will be a little below Evansville and its eastern limit near Lawrenceburg. The center of the shadow will pass to the south of Terre Haute, but the totality of this point will exist for a period of two minutes and 18 seconds."

According to the Almanac of 1869, "a total eclipse of the sun is not only one of the most imposing spectacles of

nature, but also one of the most imposing astronomical phenomena. Although such an eclipse occurs nearly every year somewhere on the earth, yet the area within which it can be observed is so small that it happens to few persons to witness one in the course of a lifetime. There have been only two that were visible in any large part of the United States since the beginning of the present century, namely, those of 1806 and of 1834. . . ."

Telegraph reports on the Solar Eclipse came in from Vincennes, Louisville, Wheeling, West Virginia, Memphis, Springfield and Chicago. All

reported the finest weather possible, clear skies, and perfect conditions for viewing the eclipse in their area. Some cities reported that thousands of persons stood in the streets with their smoked glasses to better view the once-in-a-lifetime event.

In every year there are at least two and sometimes as many as five solar eclipses, but in any one place on the earth's surface a total solar eclipse will be visible only once in about 360 years and only when the moon is new. Last year Central Asia and Siberia had a total solar eclipse.

An account found in an old diary told how the temperature dropped from 102 degrees to 60 degrees. This rapid fall recorded here began as soon as the eclipse began and fell 42 degrees in an hour. Gradually the darkness of twilight spread over the earth and gnats and other small insects thickly fluttered in the air.

Some spectators here saw two prominent sun spots and confirmed the shape of the moon as round and hanging in the sky between earth and sun. One hundred years later three earth people confirmed this fact again when they went up to see the moon from a closer vantage point than the roof of the St. Anthony's Hospital.

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Blackberry Winter and The Summerless Year

Is JUN 2 1974 By DOROTHY J. CLARK

Blackberry Winter is the time when the hoarfrost lies on the blackberry blossoms; without this frost the berries will not set. It has always been the forerunner of a rich harvest.

The spell of fine weather which so often occurs in the middle of October is known as St. Luke's Little Summer. The "little summer" part needs no explanation. The St. Luke bit derives from its coincidence with the 18th day of the month. Each year there is so much discussion about Indian Summer and Squaw Winter I thought I'd throw in a few more pieces of fascinating meteorological lore. While you read this, I'll find time to enjoy a few hours of Indian Summer.

St. Luke's Little Summer maintains its glory, at least by day, until the frost blackened the chrysanthemums and daisies and another year had grown old gracefully.

The Year Without a Summer occurred in 1818. Old New England farmers referred to the year as "Eighteen Hundred and starved to death."

January was mild, as was February, with the exception of a few days. The greater part of March was cold and boisterous.

April opened warm, but grew colder as it advanced, ending with snow, ice and winter cold. Buds and flowers were frozen in May. Ice formed half inch thick, and corn was killed.

Frost, ice and snow were common in June. Almost every green thing was killed and fruit was nearly all destroyed. Snow fell to the depth of three inches in New York and Massachusetts, and ten inches in Maine.



DOROTHY J. CLARK

July was accompanied with frost and ice. On July 5, ice of window glass thickness was formed in New York, New England and parts of Pennsylvania, and corn was nearly all destroyed in certain sections.

In August ice formed half an inch thick. Corn was so frozen that a great deal was cut down and dried for fodder. Very little ripened in New England and the Middle States. Farmers were obliged to pay \$4 and \$5 a bushel for corn of 1815 to use for seed at the next spring's planting.

The first two weeks of September were mild. The remainder of the month was cold, with frost, and ice formed a quarter of an inch thick. October was more than usually cold, with frost and ice. November was cold and blustering, with snow enough for good sledding. December was quite mild and comfortable.

The spring and summer of 1822 were exceedingly wet, and the new settlers in the Wabash Valley were sad and disheartened with water all around them, and mud, mud, mud at their feet. Grain was hauled from Fort Harrison to all the new little settlements around in the area.

Toward the close of summer the rain clouds passed by

Continued On Page 3, Col. 3.

Community Affairs File

Dorothy Clark

Continued From Page 4.

Is JUN 2 1974

and sunny weather prevailed for the pioneers. But this was not to last. The ROCKVILLE TRIBUNE at one time published an account of how the weather turned from bad to worse.

"Nancy, wife of Cornelius Sunderland, had been to her father, Nathaniel Page's one afternoon late in the autumn to borrow a reel. The houses were not more than half a mile apart and as she was returning she strolled along, gathering nuts, buried in the leaves on the ground, failing to note the change in the weather." It seems the sky had suddenly darkened and snow began to fall.

She panicked when she realized she had lost her way, and began to run, in the direction of her home but soon found she was in the deep forest, completely lost, and the snow was falling fast. She continued to wander searching for a path, night come on, and still she walked on. The tree branches were now bending beneath the weight of falling snow. Finally she took shelter in a hollow tree when she could walk no farther, wet, cold, faint she waited for daylight.

All the next day she kept up her calling for help and wandering through the deep snow. Late in the afternoon, when her strength was gone and freezing with cold, she sat down to wait for rescue or die.

Meantime, her husband spread the alarm and her neighbors and family set out to look for the lost woman. About sunset John Sunderland heard a faint cry and following the sound discovered a human figure leaning against a tree. At first he thought he had found an Indian squaw, but discovered he had located his sister-in-law. Thirty hours of exposure had completely transformed her. Her dress was in rags, her voice was almost gone, and she was so chilled that she could not climb upon a log, and he had to lift her to a horse and then hold her as he would a child.

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Cont on back

But the constitution of a pioneer woman soon brought health and she survived to be the mother of a large family and lived to old age. It was recorded that, womanlike, she had held onto the borrowed reel through all her wanderings!

New Year's Day, 1884, was also remarkable for cold weather. A cold wave accompanied by a big snow and 28 degrees below zero brought weather so severe that everything was demoralized and regular activities suspended.

The winter of 1892 was really a cold one. The Wabash river froze over during the holidays and for 10 days the thermometer never got above zero. The ice on the river was so solid and safe men hauled white oak heading blocks and logs over a road made of sawdust on the ice.

Snow started falling sometime during September, and lasted until March. On days when the sun would shine, the top of the snow would melt some, but that night a thick crust would freeze on top of the snow solid

enough for kids to put on their ice skates and travel on top of the snow.

Sometimes enough snow would pile up fence-high, and the kids could skate right over a common fence, hardly realizing the fence was there.

And still we gripe about the weather.

More about the tornado, flood of the Easter Sunday in 1913

Ts MAR 26 1976

Community Affairs File



Last week's column began the story of an Easter Sunday 65 years ago when the tornado and flood struck the area with such devastating destruction.

W. R. Cade, of the Weather Bureau, visited the scene and said the extent of the storm was worse than any shown in pictures which he used in lecturing on the destructiveness of tornadoes. Captain B. E. Stahl of the Light House Mission visited the scene and reported the Mission was prepared to house at least 150 of the homeless. Relief stations serving coffee and meals at Greenwood and Fairbanks schools also had fifty cots. A. Herz, Spencer Ball, S. C. McKeen and Captain Trites of the Volunteers directed relief work.

Peculiar happenings are always reported after tornadoes. The house and barn at 1906 S. Ninth St. were entirely demolished, but the horse was found uninjured in the cellar of the house. A featherbed tick was blown by the wind for half a block. A lace curtain was driven through a pane of glass. The window sash blew in the home of Calvin Sparks and broke his nose.

Walter Morton, night yard clerk at Southern Indiana railroad was blown from the office under a box car, and it was necessary to jack up the freight car to remove him.

The Johnson Brothers motor works at Sixteenth and Hulman was completely demolished by wind and the machinery damaged. One house was blown off its foundation and jammed against the house next door.

A buggy was found wrapped around a telephone pole at Third and Voorhees with a cat sitting on the under framework. The buggy had been picked up, with the cat in it, from a nearby yard and thrown against the post. The cat was uninjured.

The day after the tornado, a Tribune reporter found a man in the 2000 block of South 10th Street so badly jarred he was unable to give his name. He was found under the kitchen floor with a heavy range resting against his head. His wife had escaped.

At least thirty dead chickens were found lying in the alley of 1900 block on South Eighth Street. A hen house had been demolished and the fowl were crushed to the ground for a distance of 50 feet. A live pig was found also, blown from another section of the city.

In the remains of a barn back of 1802 S. 10th St., a hen's nest was found with its eggs unbroken, but the hen was dead.

A Clinton man had left his auto on the Lockport Road to be repaired. After the tornado, he found the axles of the two rear wheels had been snapped and the wheels blown away. The rest of the machine was okay, according to its owner.

A freak of the tornado caused injury to Mrs. May Parker, 2703 Arleth. They were gathering up a few valuables when the storm struck. A buggy was picked up from the yard across the alley and thrown through the double window of the collapsing house. The shafts struck Mrs. Parker in the side. Her husband was injured as he helped his wife out of the building.

Sheriff Denny Shea and his deputies, Edward Curran, Peter Feiler, Ace Robinson, Charles Shattuck and Albert McDonald were actively engaged in rescue work. James Carlos divided his time between the storm belt and the office. The entire force stayed on the job until the state militia arrived and relieved them. Sheriff Shea and Chief Deputy Rector had two automobiles in service most the first night.

Tales of miraculous escapes, freak antics of the tornado, and exciting as well as unusual experiences were told by those who were in the path of the funnel cloud. Everyone expressed amazement that the death toll was not greater after they viewed the devastation.

Dead chickens (some stripped of feathers), cats, dogs and horses were everywhere. A horse belonging to John West on the Prairieton road was blown over an eight-foot fence and set down on the other side badly scared but uninjured.

John Hanley, tent and awning man, and four members of his family had a narrow escape. He happened to go to the front door and saw the storm bearing down. Calling to his family to gather round him in the hall, they huddled behind the front door which was protected by a storm door.

The parlor where they had been seated was a total wreck, and they would have been killed by flying timber. The three-

story warehouse in the rear was demolished and piles of awnings stored in the building were scattered as far away as 25th St.

William Streeter, 2709 Arleth, had a nail shot into his thigh like a bullet. C. F. Creager, 2505 S. Fourth St., his wife and four children were caught in their home when the barn was picked up and thrown into the house. The mattress Creager was sleeping on was carried toward the barn and shot in under his horse, which was killed by falling timber and lay on the mattress.

The parlor floor of one home was lifted whole from the house and set out into the street, a center table and lamp, chairs and davenport all remaining in position. A bedroom rug from the next room was laid evenly over the furniture in the street. Fortunately no one was at home.

A sewing machine was picked up from a wrecked home, taken out in the yard, and scattered in all directions. In one room, the wallpaper was stripped off the walls, but the pictures were left hanging.

A number of trees in the yard of the home of Nicholas Charles, 510 Voorhees, were

torn out by the roots and the tops stuck in the ground with the roots sticking up in the air.

At the W. P. Ijams' country estate, Warren Park, 14 houses and several cows were pinned under the wreckage of the big barn and other outbuildings. The loss was estimated at over \$50,000.

John Newman and his ailing wife, 2600 S. First St., were in their grocery store and house when it was picked up and hurled across the street. They were dug out from under the wreckage.

D. B. Arnold searched unsuccessfully for a trace of his machine shop on South First which had been picked up by the tornado and carried away.

Hulman & Company provided 300 gas lanterns to light the Greenwood school relief station. Loudon Packing Company donated 800 cans of soup.

Employees of the American Can & Foundry helped save what furniture was left from the wreckage. Moving vans and wagons helped remove furniture from the steady downpour. Company B guardsmen helped in many ways other than guarding property.

Although a heavy loser in the storm, Fred Coppage, 2019 S. Eighth St., owner of "Our Theater" at Seventh and Seabury, turned over the theater to the sufferers for the remainder of the week and benefit shows were given. All receipts above operating expenses were turned over to the relief fund.

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Many of the destroyed homes were those of laboring men who had lost not only their house, but their furniture, and had no savings and with the Glass Works destroyed, did not even have a job.

Next week's column will deal with the flood which followed the tornado on March 23, 1913, in the Terre Haute region....

TS MAY 22 1977

Changes in Climate Recorded by Pioneers



It is a well-established fact that the settlement and cultivation of a country has a noticeable effect upon the general temperature of the climate.

But the change was so gradual, it was difficult for the pioneers to remember and describe. Written records were kept in daily journals and diaries and the weather changes can be pieced together from these.

At the first settlement of the Wabash country, the summers were much cooler than now. Warm evenings and nights were not common, and the mornings, frequently, were uncomfortably cold.

The coolness of the nights was owing, to a great degree, to the deep, dense shade of the forest trees and the luxuriant crop of wild grass, weeds and other vegetation which shaded the earth's surface and prevented it from becoming heated by the sun's rays.

Frost and snow set in much earlier than now. Snowfalls frequently occurred during the latter half of October, and winter often set in with severity during November, sometimes in the early part of that month.

The springs were formerly later and colder than they are now, but the change in this respect is not favorable to vegetation. The latest springs are generally followed by the most fruitful seasons.

It is a law of the vegetable world that the longer the germinating principle is delayed, the more rapid when put in motion. Far northern countries like Sweden, Norway and Russia which have a short summer and no spring, are among the most productive in the world.

While, in this latitude especially, vegetation prematurely started by reason of open winters and delusive springs is often checked by "cold snaps" and untimely frosts, and frequently fails to attain its ultimate perfection.

From this imperfect account of the weather system of early times, it appears that the seasons have undergone considerable change. As a rule, our springs are earlier, summers warmer, the falls milder and longer, and the winters shorter with less cold and snow than formerly.

These changes can be partly, if not wholly, attributed to the

destruction of the forests. Every acre of cultivated land must increase the heat of our summers by exposing more and more ground to be heated by the rays of the sun.

But, because there are no mountainous barriers either north or south of us in the Wabash Valley, the conflict between these two extremes will most likely continue our changeable and fickle climate forever.

Pioneers used to tell of a most remarkable blighting frost which occurred in the Wabash Valley.

The fall season of the year 1830 had been unusually mild and pleasant, and the grass and trees were still as green as in mid-summer.

On the night of November 28, the frost came so suddenly and so severely that it killed the grass and the foliage of the forest trees in a few hours' time.

The hickory nuts and acorns were so loosened by the sudden freeze that they fell in the woods like hailstones.

Pioneer Clay County resident, Elias Coopridier, always remembered the date of this unusual weather because it was the Sunday he made his first trip through the woods to see the young lady he courted and married a year later.

Coopridier was one of the founders of the town of Middlebury in Harrison Township, Clay County, Indiana.

Vigo County Public Library

Community Affairs File

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Easter Sunday of 1913: Flood and storm devastation

Community Affairs File

TS MAR 19 1978

Clark, Dorothy



In the 250 ruined homes in the city limits, families were tossed from their beds, blown through windows, trapped under caved in roofs.

It took hours to rescue some of the victims. Separated family members spent hours trying to find out whether or not their loved ones were alive or dead.

Torn down electric wires set fire to the buildings in Gardentown, and the fires raged out of control. Danger of live wires hampered rescue work in the pouring rain.

A temporary hospital was set up in the Third United Brethren Church at Third and Grant streets.

The storm center included an area from the 2000 block south to Margaret Avenue and from 25th Street west to the river.

Forty houses were demolished between 13th and 23rd and from Hulman to Washington streets.

Drs. Frisz, Spigler, Yung, Kunkler, Ulmer, Carpenter, Miller, Alexander, Shaley, Van Cleve, Duenweg, Sellers, Johnson and Elliott were called to St. Anthony's Hospital to care for the injured.

Six-year-old Charles Chadwick owed his life to the fact he had gone to a moving picture show with neighbors. He was found walking along South Fifth Street, but his home had blown away.

Mr and Mrs Fred King and their child were caught under their home when it fell on them. Mrs. King and the baby were killed, and he died on the way to the hospital. Mrs. Courtner's body was found nearby. The Harry Stewart boarding house had its roof carried away, but the eighteen boarders were unhurt.

Mrs. Sarah Mason and Miss Rose Mason, only slightly hurt, were able to crawl out of their collapsed house. Mrs. John Wade, alone with her baby, managed to put out the fire from an overturned oil lamp before leaving the house.

Paul Olson, 2106 S. 6th St., was upstairs when the wind picked up the house and carried it away. His ear was cut off when he fell two stories into the basement.

Damage in Krumbhaar Place, a recently opened subdivision in 1913, totaled over 100 houses. Police and firemen were on the scene to help rescue and prevent thievery. The nearest telephone connection to the disaster area was Ury's pharmacy, Third and Washington streets.

Seven houses owned by Fred Housman, including the one he lived in on the Lockport Road south of Idaho Street, were swept away completely. Five wrecked autos stood in the street. No. 9 Fire House was struck at the rear and part of it torn away.

Mrs. Flora Wood, 2424 S. 3rd St., was found unconscious with her baby in her arms about seven feet from her home.

The bodies of Moses Carter and his wife were found beneath the roof of their home south of Third and Voorhees. The mangled body of their small child was found 15 feet away.

The day-old baby of Mrs. Leonard Sloan, 309 Voorhees, lay in one corner of the bedroom and the mother in the other. The entire top of the house was blown away.

Alexander "Dad" Rogers, superintendent of the U.B. Sunday School, was buried beneath the walls of his home. He died while being rescued.

Sixty-five years ago Easter Sunday, March 23, 1913, dawned cloudy, and afternoon sunshine was followed by rain. The ominous darkness culminated in a tornado and torrential rain bringing with it a week of flood and storm devastation for the Terre Haute region that has never been equalled.

Beginning at 10 p.m. on Easter day, a tornado hit the south end of town, wrecking several hundred homes and businesses, claiming 20 lives, severely injuring more than 150 persons and causing an estimated \$2 million in property damages.

Before this disaster was fully realized, the northern section of the city was inundated by the rising Wabash River with over 100 homes under water.

At the same time, Taylorville (Dresser) and West Terre Haute experienced the worst floods in their history.

The violent tornado began a few miles north of Prairieton, and traveled 100 miles an hour with a roar like an express train in a northeasterly direction, leaving a trail of death and destruction in a path four blocks wide to open fields northeast of 25th Street.

Gardentown, six miles south of Terre Haute, noted for its many greenhouses, was laid low.

At least 20 greenhouses were completely demolished.

In the path of the tornado, homes were crushed as though they were made of paper. The big Root Glass Factory was wrecked as was the brick depot of the Chicago, Terre Haute and Southeast Railroad, the Gartland Foundry and L. H. Mahan's hot-house.

(over)

A large stone boarding house conducted by Mrs. Catherine Loudon. Third and Voorhees. was completely wrecked and the aged woman and her son, Ralph Loudon, were severely injured.

The area from Third to Fifth on Voorhees was completely leveled. A freight car was pressed into service as a temporary hospital. Patrol cars and fire wagons had to have some place to place the injured out of the raging rain-storm. Fires fanned by strong winds made rescue work even more difficult and hazardous.

The homes of William Stevens and Mrs. Carlson, east on Voorhees, were among those wrecked. The Kriescher and Warfield saloons on Third Street were demolished. The church on the opposite corner was wrecked.

The feed mill and power plant at Third and Voorhees was one of the first buildings to catch fire and furnished light for rescue workers.

Interns, staff physicians and nurses at St. Anthony's Hospital tended the wounded placed in all available rooms and corridors, and the operating room was busy with amputations and fractures.

Friends and relatives of those who lived in the tornado's path flocked to the

hospital to locate loved ones, adding to the confusion with joyful reunions or tearful reaction to bad news.

Among the strange vagaries of the wind was the case of a baby sleeping with its mother on South Center Street. The baby was blown through an open window into the yard with little injury.

Many lucky escapes were reported. Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Bond, 2121 S. 6½ St., were visiting Mr. and Mrs. W. I. Chaney, 1107 S. 7th St. The Chaney's had moved only the week before from 2100 S. 6½ which was completely demolished along with the Bond's home.

Dr. and Mrs. Wilcox were visiting at the home of J. H. Snyder, 2130 S. 6½. The storm threw Mr. Snyder through the window. He was unhurt, but every room in the house was wrecked except the one in which they were sitting. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Clifton were not at home when the storm demolished their home.

Next week's column will continue the story of the 1913 Easter Sunday disaster...

APR 2 1978

By Dorothy Clark



Disaster in Terre Haute area: Flood follows tornado of 1913

Community Affairs File

Earlier columns told of Terre Haute's tornado which hit late in the evening of Easter Sunday, March 23, 1913, cutting its path of destruction and death from north of Prairieton traveling in a northeasterly direction to 25th Street.

Roaring through the region sounding like an express train at 100 miles an hour, it destroyed everything in a path four blocks wide.

But the flood that followed was just as terrible.

The gauge at the waterworks showed a high water mark of 17 feet early on Monday morning and the water was rising at the rate of two inches an hour.

The lowlands north and south of Terre Haute were already flooded, and Taylorville (Dresser) residents were forced to vacate their huts.

The land west of Taylorville, from the levee to the extreme southeastern part of West Terre Haute, was flooded, and Sugar Creek was flooding the river bottoms south of Sugar Creek Levee.

The valuable farm lands in Prairie Creek township between "Battle Row" and what was known as the Fortune Schoolhouse were already under water, while the gravel road between Hutton and "Big Knoll" was flooded.

Older residents had never seen such a rapid rise of the Wabash.

Twenty-five families or half the population of "Toad Hop," a village located a mile west of West Terre Haute on the National Road, were forced to abandon their houses Sunday because of Sugar Creek being on a rampage.

When the levee broke that afternoon, the southwest corner of West Terre Haute became inundated and families moved to higher ground.

Water was several inches deep in Toad Hop, and the National Road was impassable for miles.

Clear Creek, located about five miles west of West Terre Haute, was also out of its banks and stretched over a large territory.

By Wednesday afternoon, water began sweeping

through the temporary sand embankment at the power house.

A big pump was put in action, but the rush of water was too rapid.

By 3 p.m., the river stage had reached 28 feet, six inches and was steadily rising at four inches an hour.

Fully half of West Terre Haute, all of Taylorville, and a great area in northwestern Terre Haute from Fourth to Sixth and from Maple Avenue north and south were under water.

Hundreds of families were forced out, hundreds of homes were in water up to their eaves and some were floating in deep water.

A grocery store at Fifth and Maple floated over to Sixth and Linden.

Early Wednesday morning, the river was running so rapidly and the current was so swift that Mayor Gerhardt closed the wagon bridge over the river.

It was feared the Big Four and Vandalia railroad bridges might give way.

In spite of his order, hundreds continued to cross until a cordon of police was stationed at the approach as a guard.

A force of 50 men, with two switch engines and three flatcars were rushed to the west end of the Big Four bridge and all day they worked to prevent a washout.

By noon Wednesday, the water had reached the level of the west grade of the Big Four and had broken over in many places.

The constant washing of the water under the approaches of both bridges caused renewed fear that the structures could not stand the strain.

Marshal Morgan of West Terre Haute estimated at noon that more than 3,000 persons had been made homeless, about half the town.

Vigo Clay Company and American Clay Company suspended operations throwing more than 200 men out of work.

By noon, every coal mine in the vicinity of West Terre Haute had been closed down and 5,000 miners were out of work.

At the Speedwell Mine No. 2 the water had even flooded the mine office and the mine proper was thought to be in danger of being flooded.

The same conditions prevailed at the Hall-Zimmerman mine and even the tracks leading to the shaft were under water.

Most of the train lines in and out of Terre Haute were either closed or affected in some way by the rising flood waters.

Tracks were washed out or threatened to the danger point.

Some 30 to 40 houses west of Fifth and north of the 1700 block in Maywood Terrace subdivision were under water.

Water was 15 to 20 feet deep near Maple Avenue.

Conover's Pond was overflowing and running into backwater from the river, making a watery expanse of nearly a mile.

All the families had moved out of the area where the water was within a half block of Union Hospital.

Looking westward there was nothing but water as far as the eye could see.

The river road to St. Mary's, which started at old Fort Heyden, was several feet under water. The river was at a level with the river bridge at both ends. In the middle, the water was only two and a half feet below it.

Terre Haute was rapidly becoming shut off from the world by railroad and interurban communication. The Paris and Clinton interurban lines were under water in many places.

Citizens Gas & Fuel shut down Thursday night when water was three feet deep in the plant. Reserve gas was estimated to last seven hours for daylight use only.

Prosecutor Werneke and Capt. Stahl made a trip to Ferguson Hill where a thousand persons were cut off by the floodwaters. When they tried to commandeer the boats of George Balding at the Big Four landing, he objected and pulled a revolver.

Sheriff Shea took the gun away from him, and his boats were used to rescue people from the west bank.

Water stood at 31.03 feet when fire destroyed Fort Heyden, notorious gambling resort located just across the river bridge.

Fire was discovered in the saloon run by "Lukie" Fogle and put out, but broke out again and the building was leveled. Firemen fought the blaze knee deep in flood water.

The east span of the C. & E.I. bridge at Clinton was swept away, as was the Hillside wagon bridge, but the railroad bridges here held.

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Large slides of earth on the east bank of the river between Wabash Avenue and Ohio Street fell into the river early Thursday, March 27, 1913, caused by the swift undercurrent cutting it away.

Police put up ropes to keep the crowds of sightseers back. By Friday morning, the river had dropped from 31.03 to 30.10 feet.

Is the weather changing? Well...

Historically
Speaking

By Dorothy Clark

TS JAN 6 1980



The weather is an unfailing topic of conversation, but is it true (as senior citizens say) that our weather is changing from what it was when they were young?

Going back to 1820, the Wabash River became remarkably low. The wells were all dried up, and general sickness prevailed. A so-called pestilential miasma visited every family.

The general health of Terre Haute received such a severe blow from this visitation (Malarial mosquitos?), that it did not recover from it for several years. Conditions couldn't become better until the marshes of Lost Creek were drained in 1837.

This creek, previous to being drained, had washed down and saturated the prairie east and south

of town, creating an immense morass covering several hundred acres, without any outlet except by absorption and evaporation. It was, however, drained, and the evil was effectively removed. One old pioneer told when he first came to Terre Haute he could almost swim his horse across the lower ground southeast of Strawberry Hill.

Water Everywhere

The spring and summer of 1822 in Indiana were exceptionally wet, and the newcomers to the state, those hardy settlers, were sad and disheartened...with water all around them and mud everywhere beneath them.

Local citizens were fearful of the great comet of 1843 also. Some regarded it as a "judgement," and

believed that the earth would be destroyed by its influence. The extremely cold and backward spring of 1843 was attributed to the fact that this comet absorbed the sun's heat. More recently, the atomic bomb tests and orbiting space ships have been blamed for all the bad weather.

A terrible wind storm passed over the city early in 1845, doing much damage to trees, fences and out-houses. At the close of 1851, the weather was said to have been the coldest ever experienced by the oldest inhabitants. The mercury fell to 14 degrees below zero. On Jan. 17, 1977, the all-time low of 25 below zero was reached.

In April, 1853, there was a fearful storm resulting in much damage, but the principal loss fell on the Con-

gregational Church which was nearly destroyed. It had been built in 1836-37.

Local Tornadoes

This section of the country has occasionally been visited by tornadoes, but they have seldom proved as destructive here as they have in other localities.

On April 16, 1860, a terrific tornado passed over the south part of the city and was very destructive. The large engine house of the Evansville and Crawfordsville Railroad was entirely destroyed. A German named Kuhardt was killed instantly. Pieces of timber and bricks were blown against and through other houses. Two passenger and one baggage car on the railroad tracks were overturned by the high winds.

Hagar's Ice House was un-roofed.

The candle factory was demolished, and many houses were either wholly or partially un-roofed. The Catholic Church lost its belfry. Several persons were severely injured and a great number of trees were blown down.

Another tornado passed over the city on the afternoon of July 30, 1872. Again many hundreds of trees were blown down, much valuable property was destroyed and some lives lost.

Terre Haute's location on high land above the river level has fortunately placed the city out of reach of floods. The bottom lands in this vicinity have

always been plagued by destructive floods, when the water has reached 50 feet above low water mark.

The heaviest of these so-called freshets occurred in 1834, when all the grain was lost; in 1844, when everything was swept away; again in 1851, by June 15, all was lost; again in 1858, the river was said to have been higher than ever before; in 1862 the high water came in February and cattle were drowned; then in 1869, no crops were raised on bottom land.

So you see, we have always had weather (one kind or another) in Terre Haute.

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Wizardly weather words found to abound in superstition, stories, sayings, signs, etc.

The subject of the weather is always with us, and weather superstitions are passed on from generation to generation. Here are some to add to your knowledgeable conversation about the

weather.

A red sunrise is a sure sign of bad weather, for then the sun has water in his eye. When dew is on the grass, rain will never come to pass.

When the wind is in the

east, it is fit for neither man nor beast; but when the wind is in the south, it blows the bait in fishes' mouths.

Three months after you hear the first katydid, you'll have the

first frost. A flock of crows feeding on the ground in September indicates that bad weather is coming soon.

Spring flowers blooming out of season will bring weather without

reason.

Evening red, morning gray, sends the traveler on his way; evening gray, morning red, sends the rain upon your head.

If a hoot owl hollers on the north side of the hill, it's a sign of good weather; if a hoot owl hollers on the south side of the hill, there will be bad weather.

Sayings in which sailors, travelers and farmers have believed for years include the one about a gale, moderating at sunset, will increase before midnight, but if it moderates after midnight, the weather will improve. No weather is ill, if the wind is still.

If a full moon shall rise red, expect wind. The sharper the blast, the sooner it's past. A light yellow sky at sunset pre-

sages wind.

Hazy weather is thought to prognosticate frost in winter, snow in spring, fair weather in summer, and rain in autumn. When you see the Northern Lights, you may expect cold weather.

There is an old saying (originated, perhaps, for the benefit of school children) that there is only one Saturday in the year without sun during some portion of the day.

Storms that clear in the night will be followed by a rain storm. Three foggy mornings will surely be followed by a rain storm. If the ice on the tree melts and runs, rain will come next; while if the wind cracks off the ice, snow will follow.

Signs of rain, wind

When the leaves of

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Community Affairs File

REFERENCE
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Historically
Speaking Community Affairs File
By Dorothy Clark



trees show their under side, there will be rain. When the perfume of flowers or the odor of fruit is unusually noticed, rain may be expected. When the sky is full of stars, expect rain.

If a cat washes herself calmly and smoothly the weather will be fair. If she washes "against the grain," take your mackintosh with you. If she lies with her back to the fire, there'll be a squall. Cats with their tails up and hair apparently electrified indicate an approaching wind.

If pigs are restless, there will be windy weather. Pigs can see the wind.

The direction in which

a loon flies in the morning will be the direction of the wind the next day.

Magpies flying three or four together and uttering harsh cries predict windy weather.

Weather-Wise

Thunder on Sunday is considered by the weather-wise to be the sign of the death of a great man; on Monday, the death of a woman; on Tuesday, if in early summer, it foretells an abundance of grain; on Wednesday, warfare is threatened; on Thursday, an abundance of sheep and corn the farmer may reckon upon; on Friday, some great man will be murdered; on Saturday, a general pestilence and great mortality.

Friday's weather shows what may be expected on the following Sunday; that is, if it rains on Friday noon, then it will rain on Sunday, but if Friday is clear, then Sunday will be fine as well.

The 12 days immediately following Christmas denote the weather for the coming 12 months, one day for a month. The day of the month the first snow storm appears indicates the number of snow storms the winter will bring. For example, if the first snow storm comes on Nov. 29, look out, then, for 29 snow storms.

Also remember, all signs fail in dry weather!

Historically Ts JUN 22 1980
Speaking Community Affairs File

By Dorothy Clark



Seasons' sounds, smells recalled

The nostalgic sounds and smells we all like to recall when we think of days gone by are always with us. Each season had its own special sounds, whether rural or urban.

Spring rains brought a pitter-patter on the tin roof of the hen house. Roosters crowing, the cooing of pigeons from the barn loft, the chirps or rain-calls of the robin, the chatter of the squirrel, and the barking of dogs on a neighbor's farm being answered by another.

As summer arrived, there was the laughter of children released from the classroom, the cawing of crows, the cackle of hens from the barnyard, baby pigs oinking as they tried to keep up their with their

mother.

What sound equals the bawling of the cow and calf when they're separated for the first time? There's the gobble of the turkey at dusk, the croaking of frogs in the pond, the hee-haw of the mule, the quacking of ducks, hissing of geese, the cooing of the rain doves, and the song of the meadowlark.

The clop-clop of horses' feet on a dirt road, or the hollow sound they make through a covered bridge is a never-forgotten sound, along with the nicker of horses when they hear someone coming to feed them. Who can forget the swish of the butter churn, the bobwhite calling for its mate?

Autumn approaches

when you hear the chop of the axe, the call of the hogs at feeding time, the squeak of the pump, the passing of a distant train, the baa of the sheep, long yellow ears of corn thudding against the bangboards and the rattle of wagon wheels in the cornfield.

And then cold winds and snow cover the countryside. Horses' hooves ring on frozen ground, the barn door creaks, a loose window shutter rattles on a windy night, the tomcat makes his midnight howl, the guinea fowl keeps his night watch, and the coal bucket clicks as more coal is thrown in the old stove.

There's the crinkle of dead leaves when you walk on them, icicles

drop from the eaves, snow slides down the roof with a whoosh, and the fire crackles, logs pop in the fireplace, the kettle steams on the stove, and suddenly the winter is over and spring begins the cycle all over again.

Many of these sounds are only memories today, but we have a whole new set of sounds for children and grandchildren to remember. Now we have sirens for police, ambulance and fire engines, brakes squealing, trash cans banging on pickup day, a jet plane thundering over head. There's the sound of alarm clocks, showers, toasters popping up, refrigerator doors thunking and early morning traffic.

There's railroad crossing bells dinging and train whistles, motorcycles, church bells, telephone bells and electric typewriters. We hear radio and television, and background canned music for different voices all day.

We're bombarded with clinking silverware, rattling of pots and pans, rustling of paper and newspaper shuffling, footsteps up and down stairs, doorbells, the hum of furnace or air-conditioner, toilets flushing, dish washing, doors opening and closing, hangers clattering on closet rods, a key in the lock and gargage doors humming up and down.

In a day's time we can

experience a variety of smells — like new clothes, newspaper hot off the press, minty chewing gum, a skunk, mock orange, honeysuckle (smells so sweet it almost makes you sick), and those cover-up odors used in public rest rooms to kill other smells.

I enjoy the fresh smell of bedclothes after drying in the sun on an outdoor clothesline, a tank full of gas, shampoo, nail polish, even low tide brackish smells.

What else equals the dry, wood-perfumed interior of an antique cabinet, a cedar chest, lavender, sachet of Indian herbs, damp wool (wet mittens, snowballs and apple-cheeked kids), pine needles and burning

leaves?

Nurses smell rubbing alcohol for shots, baby powder and the "wet dog" smell of small children on damp days.

I enjoy fresh gardenias, but associate roses with funerals and geraniums with cemeteries. Violets make me think of shady backyards, corsages and expensive perfume.

I can appreciate the smell of old books, new leather, rain on summer dust, chili sauce, pumpkin pie, and although I don't like coffee, I admit it smells like breakfast time.

About the weather — if you think it's cold now . . .

Believe it or not, there's a record of the coldest days in Terre Haute since 1842. Record-breaking years were 1856, 1857, 1864 and 1884.

1842 — Feb. 18, 4 above.
 1843 — Feb. 1, 2 below.
 1844 — Jan. 29, 3 above.
 1845 — Dec. 2, 10 below.
 1846 — Dec. 28, 7 below.
 1847 — Jan. 11, 9 below.
 1848 — Jan. 10, 6 below.
 1849 — Feb. 19, 1 above.
 1850 — Feb. 19, 1 above.
 1851 — Jan. 11, zero.
 1852 — Jan. 19, 11 below.
 1853 — Feb. 19, 8.5 below.
 1854 — Feb. 23, 4 below.
 1855 — Feb. 26, 4 above.
 1856 — Jan. 10, 25.5 below.
 1857 — Jan. 19, 24.5 below.
 1858 — Feb. 23, 12.5 below.
 1859 — Dec. 23, 12.5 below.
 1860 — Jan. 2, 10 below.
 1861 — Jan. 30, 3 above. 1862 — Jan. 16, 2 above.
 1863 — Feb. 3, 1 below.

Many Frozen To Death

1864 — Jan. 1, 23.5 below. This was the terrible New Year's Day when so many persons were frozen to death. There was no record kept from 1865 to 1868.

1869 — Dec. 28, 8 above.
 1870 — Dec. 24, 13 below.
 1871 — Dec. 21, 2 below.
 1872 — Dec. 21, 14 below.
 1873 — Jan. 29, 16 below.
 1874 — Jan. 15, 2 above.
 1875 — Jan. 9, 14 below. There were several other very cold days in 1875.
 1876 — Dec. 9, 8 below.

Historically Speaking

By Dorothy Clark

TS JAN 11 1981

Community Affairs File



1877 — Jan. 4, also Jan. 9, 4 below.
 1878 — Dec. 3, 16 below. There was a great deal of severely cold weather this winter. On Dec. 10 it was 12 below; on Dec. 23, it was 8 below.

1879 — Feb. 14 and 15, 2 below.
 1880 — Dec. 19, 14 below. There was nearly a week of very severe weather at this time.

1881 — Jan. 1, 2 above.
 1882 — Dec. 9, 8 below.
 1883 — Jan. 22, 4 below.

1884 — Jan. 5, 21 below. This winter was noted for its terribly cold weather.

1885 — Jan. 22, 17 below.
 1886 — Feb. 24, 8 below.
 1887 — Dec. 19, 1 above.
 1888 — Feb. 9, 1 above.
 1889 — Feb. 23, 1 above.
 1890 — No record.
 1891 — Feb. 4, 2 above.
 1892 — Jan. 20, 5.5 below.
 1893 — Jan. 6, 1.7 below.
 1894 — Jan. 25, 6.6 below.
 1895 — Feb. 8, 18 below.

Weather conditions as reported in the 1857 Daily Union stated "It appears that our winter has just set in. On Friday last we had cold winds which continued up to Saturday, and from that time up to Monday morning

we had quite a freeze. It commenced snowing quite rapidly on Monday and continued throughout the day. A few more days of such weather will give us plenty of ice, which we have been rather fearful would be scarce during the next season."

About two weeks later in the same newspaper was found this statement: "Our ice merchants are now putting up ice that is about 10 inches thick, which we have been rather fearful would be scarce. Luther G. Hager, our efficient and energetic ice merchant, informs us that he has already put up 400 tons of ice. With such progress our citizens need not lament any longer over the prospect of a want of this luxury."

Readers should remember that this ice was cut from the Wabash river — a stream which hasn't frozen over solid to any depth let alone 10 inches in this writer's memory. It's just as well refrigeration was invented.

Another note of interest was that the snow between Alton and Mattoon in Illinois was 16 inches deep. Ice on some of the local roads was one to one and a half inches thick. It's just as well, also, that automobiles and school buses hadn't been invented.

HISTORY REPEATS

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Community Affairs File

Wigo County Public Library

herald spring

Spring peepers, willow whistles

MAR 11 1984

The first signs of spring have always been the spring peepers along the edges of ponds starting their spring music. Then came the shrill sound of willow whistles in pioneer days. The small boys knew that these whistles could only be made during those few days when sap started to flow to open the winter coats of the pussy willows. This event always happened just before the pointed caps of the skunk cabbage poked out of the swamp mud. By the time the yellow cowslip blossoms opened their spring show, the willow bark could no longer be slipped off the willow sticks.

First a willow stick about four inches long was cut from a straight piece of sapling. Pounding the bark lightly with a jack-knife handle loosened it, and it could be slipped off the wood underneath.

But before doing this, one end of the stick was cut at an angle to make the mouthpiece. About an inch from the point of this cut, a V-shaped cut through the bark and wood was made about half way through the stick.

Next came the difficult part — the removal of the bark. The V-cut made it weak, and if it was torn, one had to begin all over with a new stick. When the bark was removed suc-

Historically speaking



Clark is Vigo County's official historian and formerly worked for The Terre Haute Tribune.

By Dorothy Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

cessfully, a long, hollow groove was cut from the point of the wood down to the V. This was the air passage. When the bark was back in place, and the boy blew into the groove now covered with the bark, the sweetest music ever made by a country boy was heard.

Peepers through the night and willow whistles to and from school were sure signs of spring. Tracks of bare feet were next after the clumsy felt boots were discarded with the last snow. If one was unlucky, a dose of sulphur and molasses was the spring tonic. On the other hand, the need to thin the blood after the long,

sluggish winter, brought the fragrant sassafras tea when the newly cut bark and roots of the sassafras tree were steeped in boiling water.

By the time the bark on the whistles dried and cracked open, and only a hoarse rattle was heard, the spring flowers were in bloom — pink lady slippers, Jack-in-the-pulpit, pussy willows turned yellow, and apple blossoms.

During spring housecleaning, the wall-to-wall rag carpets were taken up by pulling out and saving carpet tacks. Then the dusty carpets were hung on the clothes line and laboriously beaten with a special carpet beater of metal with a wooden handle. This was a job for young people.

Fresh newspapers were laid under the clean carpet to keep the wind from coming up through the cracks between the rough floor boards. The big pot-bellied heating stove was removed from the parlor and stored in the woodshed during the summer. There was a special device for stretching the carpet tight and holding it while the carpet tacks were put in place.

In the fall after housecleaning, a major task was the placing of the stove on its special stoveboard and

the repositioning of the stove pipe. Men were known to lose their religion when it came to fitting the crinkled end of the pipe into the uncrinkled end of another section. When one side fit, the other would pop out. The wires supporting the pipe gave a lot of trouble also. If they let go suddenly, a cloud of black soot might land on the freshly beaten carpet, and then the lady of the house lost her religion also. The changing of the seasons brought household turmoil.

Sure signs of spring when this writer was a child involved roller skates, not the shoe skates of today, but the old-fashioned kind which fastened on to sturdy shoe soles with the use of a skate key. Tennis shoes worn by the youth of today would never have held the skates of yesteryear. The skate key was always worn around the neck on a long shoelace, the way school locker keys were worn in junior and senior high school.

What ever happened to the skooter? That was a sure way to wear out just one shoe, unless the child was handy with both feet to propel the two-wheeled skooter forward. Bicycles came out when

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the weather warmed, but not as many girls were allowed bikes in earlier days. They were not considered really ladylike.

Girls played jacks on smooth sidewalks and shady porches by the hours. The game became trickier when an old golf ball was used instead of the little rubber ball. Boys played marbles, and so did some girls, if their fathers or brothers would teach them. I still have a large glass pickle jar of marbles won on my first day of school. They're considered antiques or at least collectibles now, but I keep them to remember that gleeful day when I cleaned out the boys' marble bags and made my Daddy proud.

What ever happened to the huckster man who peddled sweet corn, tomatoes, greenbeans, cantaloupes, watermelons and strawberries in season?

Who doesn't remember the rag picker who worked his way up and down the alleys of Terre Haute singing "Any rags, any bones, any bottles today? There's a big, black rag picker headed your way."

There were scissors grinders and knife sharpeners, the umbrella man who repaired bumbershoots, the tinkers who mended pots and pans before the days of teflon and the throw-away kettles.

How long has it been since a Fuller Brush man knocked on the door and offered a free vegetable brush just for listening to his spiel?

It was said that tramps and down-on-their-luck hoboes placed a secret mark on the gate of householders who would give food to the less fortunate. When Monday was always wash day and the menu could be depended upon to be hams and beans and cornbread, the hoboes always seemed to hit our backdoor. Mother was an extra good cook and baker in those days.

Older sisters remembered the Dainty Man who came around when the weather got warmer and ice was necessary. He was followed by the Eskimo Pie man who peddled his ice cream specialties from a small push cart or bicycle cart.

Signs of spring are always with us in memory. Send me yours for a future column on the subject.

Community Affairs File

of terror

Weather (F.A.) Dorothy Clark

Tornado in 1913 spawned night

T • MAR 18 1984

The night of March 23, 1913, was one of terror for the people of Terre Haute. A devastating tornado swept through the entire south end of the city, taking a heavy toll of lives, wrecking homes and businesses.

Easter Sunday dawned dark and threatening. Later the heavy air seemed to lift and the day seemed brighter. In the afternoon a wave of hot, muggy air caused the temperature to rise 30 degrees in three hours. The hot weather sent crowds of people out on the streets in search of a cool breeze, while hundreds of others attended special services held at all the churches.

Hardly had these people returned home when the tornado, awful in its intensity, dropped from the skies, cutting a swath through the city, beginning in the Krumbhaar addition in the extreme southwest part of the city, running northeast to Third and Voorhees streets, and then due east to 17th Street, then again in a north-

Historically speaking



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By Dorothy Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

easterly direction past the city limits and out into the rural areas.

Killed outright by the tornado were 13 people, and four others died in hospitals from injuries. About 250 people were hurt, some of them seriously. More than 800 homes were damaged, 500 of them wrecked or so badly damaged they had to be torn

down. Only two homes in Gardentown survived the tornado.

People who watched the approach of the tornado from the southwest saw the funnel-shaped cloud form and hang near the ground. It traveled slowly at first, increasing its speed as it gained force. It was thought that the tornado formed near the river north of Prairieton on the bluff as it left an unmistakable trail. Trees, farm houses, outbuildings and barns, everything in its path, was taken up in the vortex of the funnel-shaped cloud and torn to pieces. The houses were leveled, crushed as if egg shells.

By the time the tornado struck the Krumbhaar until it passed through Bagdad and out into the country, its speed was so sudden and intense that people living within four blocks of the devastation did not realize what had happened during the three to five minutes. It was the next morning before many people realized they

had been spared by the storm and their neighbors were not so lucky.

A large grove of forest trees on the Ijams farm on the Prairieton Road was leveled by the tornado. Their barn was demolished and 14 horses were killed. Passing into the city at a point southwest of Greenwood School, the tornado seemed to sweep everything before it. The school escaped, but the Root Glass Factory was badly damaged to the east of the storm's path two blocks wide. The houses on Voorhees between First and Fourth streets were crushed and the furnishings strewn across the city and out into the country.

When the tornado struck, the electric lines were cut and live wires were on the ground, making relief work very dangerous. Many of the wrecked houses caught fire from crossed wires, and for a time it looked as if the fire would spread. The heavy rain, however, quickly checked the fires.

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Traveling close to the ground until it passed the hill east of 16th Street, the tornado jumped over two streets, falling again with fearsome force upon the little homes on 19th Street. The depot on the C., T.H. & S.E. Railroad was completely razed, and a few feet east, the large concrete block factory building of the Johnson Brothers Engine Company was torn to pieces.

It seemed a miracle that the loss of life in the tornado district was not heavier. Entire families escaped injury when their homes were literally torn down over their heads. The path of the tornado was estimated to be 32 blocks long and four blocks wide in the city.

Within 24 hours after the storm passed, relief work was organized to care for the thousands who were homeless. Property loss was estimated at between \$750,000 and \$1 million. Insurance officials estimated the amount of tornado

insurance carried by property owners was about \$125,000.

The problem of the homeless became even greater when the driving rain later turned into a chilling blizzard of wind and snow. Help came from all directions. The Boys' Bank of Kansas, Ill., gave a concert and raised \$48 for the relief fund. An Oregon man offered a car load of potatoes. He had gone through the Galveston flood, and was eager to help. The potatoes were shipped free of charge by the railroad. The Governor ordered a car load of supplies sent to West Terre Haute. Clothing and shoes were available for all those in need.

Those who were children 71 years ago can still remember the tornado and flood that followed and have many stories to tell about their experiences. The photographs taken of the damage are of great interest to many local residents.

Destructive flood followed tornado in March of 1913

T s MAR 25 1984

Last Sunday's column told of the devastating tornado which occurred in Terre Haute on Easter Sunday, March 23, 1913. The record breaking flood which followed the tornado has never been equalled to this date.

Just 71 years ago the Wabash River from Attica, Ind., to Mt. Carmel, Ill., reached the highest stage ever known. In some sections it reached a width of seven miles and inundated land never before touched by high water. Crops were ruined. Homes were taken from their foundations. Coal mines were flooded and made useless. Railroad tracks were washed away, and bridges and levees were lost.

Large manufacturing establishments along the river fronts of the towns hit by the flood waters were forced to suspend operations until damages amounting to thousands of dollars were repaired. Entire towns were cut off from communication and several thousand families were made homeless, thrown on the generosity of their more fortunate neighbors who provided them with food and shelter, as well as clothing.

The most seriously damaged district extended from Montezuma, Ind., to Graysville, Ind., and Palestine, Ill. Caught in the wild rush of the river were Clinton, Lyford, North Terre Haute, Tecumseh, Terre Haute, West Terre Haute, Prairieton, Sugar Creek, Prairie Creek and Fairbanks townships in Indiana.

On the west bank of the Wabash the raging waters played havoc in Darwin Township, West Union, York, West York, Hutsonville, and Palestine, Ill. Thousands of acres of farm land were completely covered, and people were forced to seek refuge.

At Montezuma and Hillsdale, the tile plants and brick industries were destroyed, while at Clinton and Lyford, large bridges and trestles were washed away. The gravel road leading from Lyford to Clinton was covered 10 feet high with corn stalks its entire length, while the C. & E.I. Railroad and the traction line as well as part of the railroad bridge in that section were completely destroyed.

Historically speaking



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The busy mining towns of Bunsen (Universal) and Durkee's Ferry were hit by the floods, and the six coal mines of the Miami Coal Company and the Jackson Hill Coal & Coke Company were put out of commission. In that same area many shacks of fishermen and clubhouses were washed away. Much of the grade of the C., T.H. & S.E. Company was destroyed.

The breaking of the Tow Path Levee north of Maple Avenue in Terre Haute flooded 72 houses south of Maple Avenue from Sixth to Third streets, including Maywood Terrace, immediately southeast of Collett Park. Here the raging waters were so strong that many of the small homes were broken loose from their foundations and could be seen floating about in the flooded districts.

On the west side of the river, north of Terre Haute, the tracks and bridges of the Big Four and Vandalia railroads were badly damaged. Large sections of the grades were washed away, and travel was suspended for more than a week. The switches leading to the many coal mines in Fayette and Sugar Creek townships were destroyed, while the numerous tile and brick plants in the same section, along with the coal mines, were flooded and forced to suspend operations.

West Terre Haute received the worst share of the flood. More than

300 families were forced to flee from their homes, while business houses, churches, and school buildings were badly damaged. The tracks of the T.H. & E.T. Co., from Ferguson Hill to the dump at Taylorville (now called Dresser) were ruined and the roadbeds washed away. The plants of the Terre Haute Abattoir Company and the Valentine Packing Company were flooded, but only nominal damage resulted. Fort Heyden, the notorious roadhouse on the west end of the wagon bridge, disappeared. It was destroyed by fire at an early hour on the third morning of the flood.

Dresser suffered much damage. Every dwelling in the little hamlet was deserted several days before the flood reached its highest mark. Many homes were washed downstream and many families lost their entire belongings. Houseboats were sunk, business houses turned around or left standing on lots owned by others.

The \$300,000 Wabash river bridge withstood the strain of the flood, and according to officials, was not damaged in the least. On the east side of the river, north of the water pumping station, many houses were flooded, while the water plant proper was able to continue operation under handicap.

The Terre Haute Stone Company and the P.S. Mace sawmill were badly damaged, while the boathouse of Frank Shewmaker and Charles Baldwin suffered greatly. The electric power station was caught in the flood and after fighting the rising water until the entire machinery department was under five feet of water, they shut down. For 12 hours the city was without power.

The Vigo Ice & Cold Storage Company and the P. C. Kintz Lumber Company escaped being flooded, but large sections of their river front were washed away. Sections of earth 30 to 40 feet wide caved in south of the wagon bridge. The pleasure boat "Spalter" anchored there was sunk. The large tramway of the Wabash Washed Sand & Gravel Company was destroyed, and the engine and power house ruined, an estimated damage of \$20,000. The plant of the Gas Company at the foot of Swan Street, and the Terre Haute Handle Company, at the foot of Oak Street, were badly damaged and out of running order for some time.

Along this part of the river front many small boats were wrecked, while boathouses and fishing camps and nine summer houses were ruined.

The height of the flood was reached at 1 p.m. Thursday, March 27, 1913, when the water works gauge showed a stage of 31 feet, 3 inches. After being stationary for four hours, the water began to recede and by 7 p.m. it had fallen a half inch. The drop became gradual after that time, and by 7 p.m. Friday, March 28, was only 30 feet, 1½ inches.

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Community Affairs File

Earthquake (in) +

Clark, Dorothy Community Affairs File

T: DEC 16 1984

Mississippi Valley The quakes of 1811 Shocks rocked throughout

The memorable earthquake of Dec. 16, 1811, shook the Mississippi Valley to its center, vibrating along the courses of the rivers and valleys, and passing the mountain barriers to die away along the shores of the Atlantic Ocean.

According to one account, it began with distant rumbling sounds, succeeded by discharges as if a thousand pieces of artillery were suddenly exploded. The earth rocked to and fro, vast chasms opened, and columns of water, sand and coal shot out, accompanied by the hissing of escaping steam and flashes of electricity.

Hills disappeared, and lakes were found in their place. Numerous lakes became elevated ground with vast heaps of sand scattered in every direction. One of the lakes formed on this occasion was 60 to 70 miles in length and from 3 to 20 in breadth. It was very shallow in some places, but 50 to 100 feet deep in others, more than the depth of the Mississippi River in that area.

One description of the terrible natural happening stated that the first shock was felt in the night and

Historically speaking



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repeated at intervals, with decreasing violence into the following February.

New Madrid, which suffered more than any other town on the Mississippi River, was considered to be the center of the earthquake, but the center of its violence was thought to be near the Little Prairie, 25 or 30 miles below New Madrid. The vibrations from this point were felt all over the Ohio Valley as high up as Pittsburgh.

An eyewitness who was about 40

miles below New Madrid, in a flatboat on his way to New Orleans with a load of produce, told of the agitation that convulsed the earth and filled the waters of the mighty Mississippi with every living creature of horror.

The first shock took place in the night, while the boat was lying at the shore in company with several others.

Now, at this period there was danger from southern Indians, it being soon after the Battle of Tippecanoe. For safety several boats kept in company, for mutual defense in case of attack. In the middle of the night there was a terrible shock and jarring of the boats, and the crews were awakened and hurried on deck with weapons of defense in their hands, thinking the Indians were rushing on board.

The ducks, geese, swans and various other aquatic birds quietly resting in numberless flocks in the eddies of the river were alarmed and screeched their terror as they flew up in the sky.

Soon the noise and commotion became hushed, nothing exciting

could be found, so the boatmen concluded that the shock was caused by the falling in of a large mass of the river bank near them. As soon as it was light enough to see, the crews were all up making ready to depart.

A loud roaring and hissing was heard, like the escape of steam from a boiler, accompanied by the most violent agitation of the shores and tremendous boiling up of the waters of the Mississippi in huge swells, rolling the waters below back on the descending stream, and tossing the boats about so violently that the men could hardly keep on their feet.

The sandbars and points of the islands gave way and were swallowed up in the rolling waters. They carried with them cottonwood trees, cracking and crashing as they disappeared beneath the flood. The water of the river was clear and low the previous day, but changed to a reddish hue, thick with mud thrown up from the bottom. The surface was covered with foam from the intense movement. The earth on the shores opened wide fissures, throwing the water, sand

and mud in huge jets, higher than the tops of the trees as they closed again.

The atmosphere was filled with a thick vapor or gas, giving the light a purple tinge, altogether different from the Indian summer haze or smoke. The river rose five or six feet in a few minutes caused by the temporary check to the current, the heaving up of the bottom, and the sinking of the banks and sandbars into the stream's bed.

Then all of a sudden, the current rushed forward with full strength, hurrying along the flatboats that had been set loose by the terrified boatmen. They saw less danger on the water than at the shore where the banks threatened every moment to destroy them by the falling earth or to carry them down in the deep plunges.

Many boats were overwhelmed in this way, and their crews died with them. It required the utmost exertions of the men to keep the boats in the middle of the river.

Many boats wrecked on the snags and old trees thrown up from the bottom of the river. Others

were sunk or stranded on the sandbars and islands. At New Madrid several boats were carried by the reflux of the current into a small stream that empties into the river just above town. They were left on the ground by the returning water a distance from the river.

The scenes that occurred for several days during the repeated shocks were horrible. The sulphur gases discharged during the shocks tainted the air and water some 150 miles below. It was not safe to use for any purpose for several days.

New Madrid, which stood on a bluff bank, 15 or 20 feet above the summer floods, sank so low that the next rise covered it over with five feet of water. The bottoms of several fine lakes in the vicinity were elevated and became dry land.

The year 1811 was long remembered for the building of old Fort Harrison, the Battle of Tippecanoe, the building of the steamer "New Orleans," the first boat built west of the Alleghenies, and most of all for the series of earthquakes that affected the whole Mississippi Valley.

Snow on July 4th?

No, but that's about all that didn't

The weather has always been the most important topic of conversation. Hot weather, cold weather, rain, snow, hot sun, thunder and lightning, tornado and balmy breeze — they all affect our lives to some degree.

Have you heard the story of the two farmers who were composing an almanac and trying to predict the weather for each day of the coming year? When they came to the 4th of July, one of them wanted to put down "snow." The other objected that he didn't think it would snow on the 4th of July.

"I don't think so either," replied the first, "but if it should happen to snow that day, our almanac would be the only one to have predicted the correct weather."

The most famous weather predictions were made by Tecumseh. He spoke of a great sign that would come when tribal unification had been completed, when all was in readiness to drive the white men from the land. It never failed to awe his savage audiences.

Historically speaking



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In the midst of the night, the earth beneath would tremble and roar for a long period. Jugs would break, although there would be no one near to touch them. Great trees would fall, although the air be windless. Streams would change their courses to run backwards, and lakes would be swallowed up into the earth and other lakes suddenly appear.

The bones of every man would

tremble with the trembling of the ground and they would not mistake it. No! There was not anything to compare with it in their lives nor in the lives of their fathers or the fathers before them since time began. When this sign came, they were to drop their mattocks and flesh scrapers, leave their fields and their hunting camps and their villages and join together and move to assemble across the lake river from the fort of Detroit.

And on that day they would no longer be Mohawks or Senecas, Oneidas or Onondagas, or any other tribe. They would be Indians! One people united forever where the good of one would henceforth become the good of all. So it would be!

Well, Tecumseh was partly right and partly wrong. The Indians never did become one tribe and drive the white man into the sea. But the Great Earthquake of 1811 did happen just as he predicted.

His brother, the Prophet, is quoted as saying, "Fifty days from

this day there will be no cloud in the sky. Yet, when the sun has climbed to its highest point, at that moment will the darkness of night cover us and the stars shine round about us. The birds will go to roost and the night creatures will awaken and stir. Then you will know, as the white chief Harrison has said, that your Prophet has been sent to you from Moneto."

Tecumseh had learned about the total eclipse of the sun, and his brother was using that knowledge to scare the Indians into believing that he was truly the Prophet.

The stories of the early settlers of the Wabash Valley confirm the terrible winter of 1830, which was very cold with exceptionally deep snows. John Lee was born in 1817 and came to settle with his parents in 1830 in the Clinton area just east of where the No. 3 Mine was later located. The unbroken wilderness abounded in game and Indians, he recalled.

The Lee family lived in a log cabin with one end taken up by a

happen in 1800's

Holidays, Special Events, Posters

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huge fireplace. Doors were on opposite sides, so they could hitch up the horse to a big back log and drag it into the cabin over the puncheon floor, in one door and through the other. This one "firing up" did for all day.

His future wife, Jane C. Davis, came to the Clinton area with her father in 1824. Her memories of that terrible winter of 1830 were very similar to Lee's. They both survived and were married in 1839 and produced nine children.

The winter of 1852 was also memorable for its weather. January dropped to 30 degrees below zero with snow about a foot deep from the 6th to the 25th with only a slight thaw until the 31st. All the small streams were blocked with ice. The creeks were frozen solid, and the Wabash and Ohio rivers were closed.

February 1852 had a remarkably fine sugar season because of the mild days and freezing nights. March was memorable because of its extremes from summer heat to

winter cold within a few hours, from five degrees to 68 degrees in just a short time.

There was no plowing before April 27 that year, no leaves on the beech trees, no flowers on orchard trees, but the next four years farming was good during April. During May 1852 the weather was very cold, with drizzling rain, frosty nights and the heavy frosts. Early potatoes and corn were killed in the ground.

January 1853 was quite warm, above freezing by noon all month. The roads were very bad, of course. January 1854 had extreme and sudden changes, violent thunder storms one day, below zero the next. On the 20th hailstones drifted in hills during a storm.

January 1855 was long remembered for its snow storms. Drifting snow blocked railroads in some places in Indiana for nearly two weeks. More than eight inches fell in one night. And we think we have weather in 1985!

'Winter of deep snow'

Community Affairs File

T s DEC 22 1985

Weather (w) Clark, Dorothy
Bad weather became milestone

for dating events

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To the early settler of the Wabash Valley, the winter of 1830 became known for its deep snow. It was such an important and extraordinary phenomenon that it became a milestone, so to speak, from which he could date other events.

In future years, he relied upon "the winter of the deep snow" to recount the date of his arrival in the valley, his marriage, the birth of his children or any other important event.

If the Indian traditions are correct as to what occurred before the white man's arrival, the deep snow of 1830-31 equalled the disastrous snowfall of 1755, which swept away immense herds of buffalo and elk that roamed over the Indiana-Illinois prairies. This tradition was verified by the first white settlers who found vast quantities of bones on the prairies in different areas.

Snow began falling early in autumn and continued at intervals

Historically speaking



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throughout the winter. The snowfalls would be succeeded by heavy sleet, forming crusts of ice between layers of snow.

The log cabins of the settlers were few and far between. Some of the roads were merely trails or bypaths. Larders were not well supplied with sufficient provisions to last the isolated families through the winter.

Frequently, for weeks at a time, the sun was not visible and the cold was so intense that not a particle of snow would melt on the south side of cabins. For weeks people were blockaded or housed up and remained so until starvation compelled them to go in search of food. The settlers endured great suffering and hunger and, in some cases, even death.

Game, such as deer, prairie chickens, quail and rabbits, before that time was abundant. For years afterward such game was scarce, having perished in the snow. As the snow would thaw, deer would often be caught and killed without aid of firearms; the hunters could walk on top of the snow.

Later in that terrible winter, when the mass of snow and ice had become compact, fences that were staked and ridged were driven over with heavily laden vehicles. Snow in many places where it had not drifted was 3 to 5 feet deep.

Some of the drifts were over the roofs of the cabins.

In the spring when this immense snow melted, rivers and marshes flooded and the settlers suffered again. Transportation was again at a standstill. As the warm season progressed, fever and ague were prevalent in the low-lying areas.

Another landmark that early settlers used to date important events in their lives was a sudden freeze that occurred shortly after noon one day in January 1836. The pioneer woman said "her family had just finished their noon day meal and were setting around in front of the old-fashioned large open fireplace, enjoying its warmth, chatting and discussing the weather.

"During the morning it had been snowing and raining a little, when she looked out the cabin window and noticed a heavy black cloud lying off to the west which seemed

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to be rapidly approaching. Needing some water, she took a bucket and went to the well, a distance of about 100 yards, and lowering the bucket with a long sweep she filled it and started back to the house.

"Before she could reach the house, the wind and rain struck her, blew and upset a portion of the water on her clothing. The cold aircut like a knife and before reaching the house, her dress and apron were frozen stiff in a solid sheet of ice."

According to the pioneer, "ponds which a moment before were free of ice were frozen solid in a few minutes. Many persons froze to death who happened to be caught away from home. Many others, before they could get to shelter, had their faces, ears, hand and feet frozen."

Just before the storm, the ground had been covered with a slushy mixture of snow and rain. Cattle in the field were held fast by the slush

freezing about their feet. It was necessary to cut away the ice to liberate them. Ducks and geese had to be rescued in the same way. Scarcely 10 minutes after the cold wave swept over the land, the water and melting snow were hard enough to bear up a man on horseback.

Other years brought other memorable events. The year 1800 was known as the year of the Great Locust. The next year, 1801, became known as the year of the squirrel, when the rodents were so numerous and so destructive to the crops and lives of the pioneers.

The old settlers' experiences have been varied, for sure.

They contended with sickness, with no doctor near; hunger, with no food at hand; and cold, with no comfortable shelter.

And yet they chose to accept the hardships of pioneer life as if it was the accepted way of living in those early times.

Clark, Dorothy 'Great Shake' hit valley 75 years ago

18 DEC 07 1986

The year 1811 was long remembered for the building of Fort Harrison, the Battle of Tippecanoe, the building of the steamer New Orleans, the first river boat built west of the Alleghenies — but most of all for the series of earthquakes that destroyed New Madrid on the Mississippi River and affected the entire river valley.

"The Great Shake," as it was called, began on the night of Dec. 16, 1811, when the first shock was felt, and repeated itself at intervals, with decreasing violence, into February 1812. The center of the quake was believed to be near Little Prairie, 25 to 30 miles below New Madrid; it suffered more than any other town on the river. From its bluff 20 feet above flood stage it fell to a depth of 5 feet. Lake beds became dry land. Vibrations were felt all over the Ohio Valley as far north as Pittsburgh and east to the Atlantic.

An eyewitness in a flatboat on his way to New Orleans with a load of produce was tied up along shore

Historically speaking



By Dorothy J. Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

Clark retired as The Tribune-Star women's editor in 1980. She has written a local history column for 30 years. She is Vigo County Historian.

for the night with several other boats for protection against Indians. They were about 40 miles below New Madrid when the first convulsion of the river banks occurred. Wide cracks appeared in the earth, only to close again throwing water, sand and mud in huge jets higher than the tree tops.

A thick sulphur gas filled the air and tainted the water for 150 miles south. The river current was

checked by the heaving up of the bottom, banks and sandbars sank into the water, and the river rose five to six feet in a few minutes. The boatmen had cast off the lines believing there was less danger on the water than on shore.

Many boats were capsized, and their crews perished with them. It took superhuman strength to keep the boats in the middle of the river, away from shores, sandbars and islands. Old snags thrown up from the river bottom wrecked many of the flatboats.

Hills disappeared and lakes were found in their places. The bottoms of several fine lakes in the vicinity of New Madrid were elevated and became dry land, later planted in corn. Reelsfoot Lake in Tennessee, popular with present day boating enthusiasts, was created by the Great Earthquake of 1811.

The distant rumbling sounds were followed by discharges sounding as if a thousand pieces of artillery were suddenly exploded. As the earth rocked to and fro, vast chasms opened and columns of water, sand and coal erupted. This

was accompanied by the hissing of escaping steam and flashes of electricity.

Early in September 1811, a comet appeared in the northern skies, and passing across our hemisphere, disappeared in the south at the end of the year. Less enlightened citizens were alarmed and looked on this as a bad omen of misfortune to come.

On Sept. 17 there was an annular eclipse of the sun that lasted from about noon until after 3 p.m., a grand and impressive sight. The bright cloudless sky turned into twilight darkness during the height of the eclipse. Chickens and birds went to roost.

On Nov. 7 the Battle of Tippecanoe brought grief and distress to almost every family as word reached home of the death or wounding of relatives and friends. But Indian attacks were forgotten when the Great Shake occurred Dec. 16.

William Henry Harrison was quoted as saying "the frontiers

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Community Affairs File

never enjoyed more perfect repose," the greatest misstatement of the year. Fort Harrison was crowded with settlers moving in for protection. Finally, on Sept. 4, 1812, the Indians attacked the fort, one of the last battles on the frontier of the War of 1812.

Tecumseh had been trying to unify the Indian tribes since 1798. His plan was to drive the white settlers back east across the mountains or completely destroy them. When the time was right, he promised to stamp his foot and the earth would tremble and roar, trees would fall, streams would run backwards, lakes would be swallowed up, etc. This sign would shake men everywhere.

The Indians believed that Tecumseh could foretell the future as his father had been able to do. When he predicted the eclipse, they believed his power.

The earth did shake on Dec. 6, 1811, and the rumble was heard to Canada. Great herds of buffalo were

knocked to their knees before they staggered up and stampeded.

The first quake lasted two days. The second quake struck Jan. 23, 1812, and a third hit four days later. The fourth and worst quake came on Feb. 13 and lasted for an hour, doing more damage than the other three combined.

Tecumseh was killed at the Battle of Thames. The Indians lost their greatest leader, but the whites won the Northwest Territory. Tecumseh may have had a large streak of ESP inherited from his ancestors, but historians believe he had read and studied astronomy enough to know when an eclipse was to occur. How he predicted so accurately about the Great Shake of 1811 and how he knew when to stamp his foot have never been explained.

With the eclipses, volcanoes erupting and other strange natural happenings in this country and abroad, rumors are widespread that another earthquake is predicted for the Midwest. This one they can't blame on Tecumseh.

Out-of-season tornado hit wildly at Terre Haute in December 1904

Is DEC 06 1987 Clark R. Dorothy

A tornado in December is very rare, and was considered to be a "freak of season" when the twister hit Terre Haute on Sunday, Dec. 5, 1904.

Without warning the storm left a trail of damage across the downtown area when it struck at noon, wrecking buildings, uprooting trees and juggling roofs in a peculiar manner.

Scores of persons were slightly hurt, but the property damage was extensive. The tornado's path was confined to a few blocks and other sections of town were not touched by the storm.

The funnel-shaped cloud was seen approaching the city from the southwest, high above the ground, now and then dipping a little in its writhing, twisting flight. Experts believed the fact that the funnel was high in the air prevented Terre Haute from being the scene of one of the worst storms in history.

Observers believed the funnel did not actually touch down, but that the damage was caused by suction from the twister as it dipped in its destructive flight. The roofs that were blown off seemed to rise straight into the air before dropping to the ground.

Carl Stahl Jr. witnessed most of the downtown destruction from the top floor of the Stahl-Urban building on Ohio Street (where WTHI is now). "When the storm hit," he said, "it became dark very suddenly and the wind rose; the debris striking the roof made us think it was a hail storm. I glanced out the north window just in time to see the roof of Goldsmith's commission house leap about 40 feet into the air, turn over and drop to the

Historically speaking



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ground.

"At the same time," Stahl said, "the roof of Hulman's building seemed to bulge up in the center so that we could see it above the coping, which is about 8 feet high.

"One of the other men had seen a wagon, parked in the rear of Germania Hall, suddenly move forward and turning the corner of the alley, run out into Ninth Street."

The workmen with Stahl were all frightened, but the freak storm was over so suddenly they didn't have time to get out of the building.

The Wabash Distillery, First and Park streets, was the first damage reported. It was completely unroofed. From there, across town as far as the Union Depot, buildings were unroofed, trees blown down, chimneys blown away, and windows broken.

The heavy downpour of rain which accompanied the storm drenched hundreds of churchgoers as they were returning home from morning services. Many people narrowly escaped serious injury from flying debris.

J. V. Clatfelter and his small daughter were sitting in their buggy in front of Fire Headquarters on Ninth Street when the wind suddenly overturned horse, buggy and occupants. Firefighters, trying to aid the Clatfelters, were unable to open the firehouse doors until the wind had spent its fury. Painful bruises were the only injuries, and after the horse and buggy had been righted, they continued to their home.

A small boy was caught by the wind as he was walking along Wabash Avenue between Seventh and Eighth streets and was rolled against the curb on the opposite side of the street. Except for a layer of mud, the lad was unharmed.

The rear portion of the roof over Duenweg's dancing academy was torn off and half of it was dumped on the sidewalk in front of De-Armott's cigar store. The other half was turned over on the roof of the Mayer building next door west.

One theory was that the Trust building (Merchants Bank) at Seventh and Wabash, caused the twister to divide and form a

whirlpool on the west side. This swoop of the wind struck the roofs of neighboring buildings and threw them in every direction.

Charles C. Goldsmith's, 934 Wabash Ave., suffered the greatest damage. The entire roof was lifted off and carried about 50 feet to the rear of the building. Smaller pieces were carried three blocks away. The contents of the building were badly damaged also.

Goldsmith had taken out tornado insurance the year before and was fully covered. After the storm, he was patting himself on the back for his forethought.

All the windows on the south and west sides of the Hulman building were blown out. All the buildings near Seventh and Ohio suffered damage. Windows were wrecked in the Swope Block.

When the plate-glass windows of Billie Boyle's cigar store were demolished, employee Fred Piper was thrown across the room. Glass was flying in every direction at Seventh and Wabash. Even the soda fountain at the Oak Hall Pharmacy was damaged and the fruit syrups ruined.

When the window full of bottled goods toppled over, wistful eyes mourned the remains of perfectly good whiskey. Peoples Brewery suffered damage to roof and machinery. Bronson's Bath House lost most of its slate roof. Only two walls of the old Wabash distillery were left standing. The wind collapsed the structure when the roof lifted off.

Electric light circuits were out, and the Varieties Theater was forced to use gas in the footlights at the afternoon performance. The nickel shows were unable to operate.

Box cars were overturned in the E. & T. H. yards just north of Wabash Avenue. Sections of sign boards, wrecked umbrellas and badly bedraggled hats were strewn along Wabash after the storm.

The sudden drop in temperature kept many sightseers home, but the tall tales continued to be heard. A man ran into a downtown church during the height of the storm and reported, "All youse people what's got automobiles had better get 'em, cause they's running away."

By moon, sun, sky and fog. . .

Early forecasters knew what to expect

Ts DEC 27 1987

Historically speaking



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Sailors, Indians and backwoodsmen could predict the weather because they knew all the signs. For example, the darker the color of the sky, the more it indicates dry weather. The paler it is, the more it indicates wet weather. Paleness and dullness of the sun and moon means wet weather. When they are bright and clear, dry weather is assured.

A ring around the moon foretells rain, and if the moon is not visible but the stars look larger and paler, this also says rain. When the stars look smaller and twinkle, we can look for dry weather.

Whether clear or cloudy, a rosy sky at sunset foretells fine weather; a red sky in the morning, bad weather or much wind; a gray sky in the morning, fine weather; a high dawn, wind; a low dawn, fair weather.

Soft-looking or delicate clouds foretell fine weather, with light breezes; hard-edge, oily-looking clouds, wind. A bright yellow sky at sunset presages wind; a pale yellow, wet; and by the prevalence of red, yellow or gray tints, the coming weather can be foretold accurately, especially if aided by scientific instruments.

There are other signs of a coming change in the weather. When birds of long flight, rooks, swallows, or others, hang about home, or fly up and down or low, rain or wind can be expected.

When sea birds fly out early, and far to seaward, moderate wind and fair weather may be expected. When they hang about on land, or fly inland, expect a strong wind and stormy weather.

Animals also foretell weather. When they seek sheltered places instead of spreading over their usual range; when pigs carry straws to their sty; when smoke

from chimneys does not rise readily, or straight up during calms, an unfavorable change is probable.

Dew is an indication of fine weather. So is fog. Neither of these two occur under an overcast sky, or when there is much wind. Fog is occasionally rolled away by wind, but seldom or never forms while it is blowing.

The following old poem was supposed to have been written as an excuse to a friend for postponing an invitation to a country excursion contains many weather signs:

"The hollow winds begin to blow,
The clouds look black,
The glass is low.
The soot falls down,
The spaniels sleep.
And spiders from their cobwebs creep.

Last night the sun went
pale to bed,
The moon in haloes hid her head,
The boding shepherd heaves
a sigh,
For see, a rainbow spans the sky.

The walls are damp,
the ditches smell,
Closed is the pink-eyed pimpernel.
Hark, how the chairs and table
crack;
Old Betty's joints are on the rack.

Her corns with shooting pain

torment her,
And to her bed untimely sent her.
The smoke from chimneys
right ascends
Then speeding back to earth
it bends.

The wind unsteady veers around,
Or detting in the south is found.
The tender colts on back do lie,
Nor heed the traveler passing by.

In fiery red the sun doth rise,
Then wades through clouds to mount
the skies.
Loud quack the ducks,
the peacocks cry,
The distant hills are looking nigh.

How restless are the snoring
swine.
The busy flies disturb the kine.
Low o'er the grass the swallow
wings;
The cricket, too, how loud it sings.

Puss on the hearth, with
velvet paws,
Sits smoothing o'er her
whiskered jaws.
Through the clear stream
the fishes rise,
And nimbly catch incautious flies.

The sheep were seen at early light,
Cropping the meadow with eager
bite.
The sky is green, the air is still,
The mellow blackbird's voice
is shrill.

The glowworms, numerous
and bright,
Illumined the dewey dell last night.
At dusk the squalid toad was seen,
Hopping, crawling o'er the green.

The frog has lost his yellow vest,
And in a dingy suit is dressed.
The leech, disturbed, is newly
risen,
Quite to the summit of his prison.

The whirling wind the dust obeys,
And in the rapid eddy plays.
My dog, so altered is his taste,
Quit mutton bones, on grass
to feast.

And see yon rooks, how odd
their flight,

They imitate the gliding kite;
Or seem precipitate to fall,
As if they felt the piercing ball.

"Twill surely rain. I see with sorrow
Our journey must be put off
tomorrow."

Old proverbs express weather signs:
"A rainbow in the morning,
Gives the shepherd warning.
A rainbow at night,
Is the shepherd's delight."

"Evening red, and morning gray,
Are certain signs of a
beautiful day."

"When the glowworm lights
her lamp,
The air is always damp."

"If the cock goes crowing to bed,
He'll certainly rise with a
watery head."

"When you see gossamer flying,
Be ye sure the air is drying."

"When black snails cross
your path,
Black clouds much moisture hath."

"When the peacock loudly bawls,
Soon we'll have both rain
and squalls."

"When ducks are driving through
the burn,
That night the weather takes
a turn."

"If the moon shines like
a silver shield,
Be not afraid to reap your field.
But is she rises haloes round,
Soon we'll tread
on deluged ground."

"When rooks fly sporting high
in air,
It shows that windy storms
are near."

"Crows on the fence,
The storm is going hence;
Crows on the ground,
The storm is coming down."
Even the bravest weather
forecasters know: All signs fail in
dry weather.

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The mild winter of 1851

Short sleighing season didn't hold its usual fanfare

1's DEC 9 2 1990

According to the Terre Haute Journal of 1851, "a milder winter than the present has never been known on the Wabash. The month of January was distinguished by an almost uninterrupted Indian summer, with birds singing, flies buzzing, and even an occasional mosquito bite.

"February came in with an abundance of wind, a hard freeze, and a snow storm; yet even now the skies are bright again, and the warm sun is rapidly melting the snow."

Young people enjoyed the short sleighing season. The sport was "indifferent at best, and the poor horses would spell it 'slaying.'"

In earlier days, after the first heavy snowfall and the winter was well set in, one could expect good sleighing all winter, and everybody that had a horse had a sleigh, and the young men of the town made great sleighs drawn by four horses. These would hold 20 to 30 people, and whole parties would visit the nearby road houses for dancing and musical entertainments.

These road houses were respectable inns situated along major roads and highways. Watton Cot-

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tage was located four miles north of Terre Haute on the Lafayette Road. The Redford House stood about where Eighth Street and Lafayette Avenue meet.

The Four-Mile House was on the National Road east of town. The National Road House was on the south side of Wabash west of 11th Street, well out in the country in the 1850s.

A firm of young carpenters, Cone & Weatherwax, built a monster sleigh with a bed 30 feet long resting on two sets of runners. The bed was made of twisted rye straw,

the ropes of straw perhaps two inches in diameter. These ropes were woven in and out between upright stakes set in stringers fastened to the runners.

The front and rear of the bed was 10 feet high, and curved down to about 6 feet high in the center of the sides of the sleigh's body.

Beautifully carved swan's heads with long curved necks were placed on each side of the driver's seat. A door in the rear like the door of an omnibus fit tightly. When this was closed, no wind could reach the riders.

The sleigh would hold 50 people, and with six horses driven by Si Bullard, Terre Haute's most accomplished and noted stage coach driver, was a sight worth seeing.

When the sleighing parties reached their destination, someone's home or one of the above mentioned public places, dancing and refreshments were enjoyed.

Extra-polite males, demure, hanky-coquetting females with long dresses, leg-of-mutton sleeves, small waists and rustling bustles swayed to the sedate strings of mazurkas, schottisches, polkas,

and the gay, lilting Strauss waltzes.

Fans and bushels of bundled up hair and long curls danced the Virginia Reel.

An occasional flash of ankles was enjoyed by the men with their huge mustaches, sideburns, tights suits, high collars, stock collars and ardent eyes.

They bowed to the ladies curtsy when intermission was called. Under the strict eye of the chaperon, the prim, corseted, swathed and sedate young ladies accepted a cup of punch from their escorts.

During the snowy winter months, Strawberry Hill was the early playground for the children with their little sleds.

Older folks heeded the old proverb:

"Walk fast in snow
In frost walk slow
And still as you go
Tread on your toe
When frost and snow
Are both together
Sit by the fire
Spare shoe leather."

Community Affairs File

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Cool thoughts from century past

Helpful household advice for surviving the heat

JUL 08 1990

When the thermometer hits the 100-degree (or higher) mark, and that's in the shade, it's time to try out all the old hints about keeping cool — especially when the central air conditioning quits or the power goes off or whatever.

Housewives have always known that necessary housework should be done "in the cool, cool, cool of the morning."

Century-old publications advised the housewife to "sponge the bread at night, that it may be ready to mold into loaves in the morning, and do other baking at the same time." Sponging the bread was mixing the dough to rise.

"If you have washing to do," the hints advised, "soak your clothes overnight, and boil them up in the morning, after a partial rubbing for much soiled clothes; or use erasive soap and a spoonful of sal-soda in the boiling suds to save a great deal of rubbing."

"Remind your husband that a good washing machine and wringer would be acceptable as soon as he can afford it."

"When baking or washing is to be done, provide beforehand for breakfast that it may be prepared with little trouble. If the baby keeps you awake nights, go to bed early. Nature exacts severe

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penalties for violated law."

When the temperature soars, the advice given a century ago is still sound. "Clean floors in the morning, and iron after tea. Put your house in order immediately after breakfast, and before retiring at night. Begin to think about next winter's comfort, and so always have knitting or something ready for leisure moments."

On the subject of keeping cool in hot weather, the editor of a farmer's publication of 1864 found it "amusing to notice different plans men have tried to keep cool. One sits by an open window, where the hot blast comes from the dusty street, fanning himself furiously,

fuming and fretting at the heat, and making himself still more uncomfortable by often looking at the thermometer.

"Another one is trying the experiment of fighting fire with fire, by drinking punch and juleps to heat his blood and thus keep cool!"

"But right across the way sits a man who does not appear to know what the weather is. He is so busy with his work that he thinks of nothing else, and so the heat makes little impression on him. He knows the secret of keeping cool — to think about something else."

Ever so often a "new" recipe comes along. The one in the "American Agriculturist" of 1864 was Popcorn Pudding for summertime or wintertime. It's necessary to have some leftover popcorn, and that's a problem because there isn't any at my house. But make extra and hide it.

One pint of corn will make about 16 pints when popped, and this will measure about eight pints when ground.

Crush the popped corn with a rolling pin on a table, and then grind it into coarse meal in a common coffee mill. In a large size mill, it can be ground without rolling. (Say, that's a real time

saver!)

To make the pudding, mix five pints of the meal with four pints of sweet milk (as opposed to sour?). Place it where it will warm slightly, and let it soak an hour or two.

Then let it cool and add two eggs, sugar, raisins and spice as for a rice pudding. Set it on a hot stove and boil a few minutes, stirring it several times to get the meal well mixed with the milk.

Then bake it about an hour, and serve while hot. Popcorn pudding was highly recommended for good flavor, healthfulness and its easy recipe.

I wonder how long it will take a Wabash Valley cook to work this recipe out for the microwave?

So, to sum up, keep cool, ask for a washing machine, bake popcorn pudding, and *think* cool this summer.

The amount of strength derived from a pound of corn eaten as food is just equal to the force which the sun's heat required to produce it.

My advice is to sit in an air-conditioned room while you figure all this out. Pass the time by trying to imagine how your descendants generations from now will be keeping cool.

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Terre Haute obscured by sun

Scientists from around nation came to study eclipse

¹ AUG 04 1991
Scientific men from all parts of Indiana and the nation gathered in Terre Haute on Saturday, Aug. 8, 1869. This city was within the limit of total obscuration, a most eligible point from which to view an eclipse.

The New York World sent its correspondent, George L. Frankenstein. The Indianapolis Journal sent E.W. Halford, and the Indianapolis Sentinel was represented by J. H. Holliday. Also present were Professor Moore, Professor R.S. Bosworth, Professor B.C. Hobbs and other prominent men.

The day dawned with a cloudless sky. All the elements were most favorable. Observations were taken at several places in the city, but the main place was on top of the old Female College building, later St. Anthony's Hospital, at Sixth and College streets. Here the correspondents and other distinguished visitors waited.

Precisely at 4:16½ p.m. the first contact was made, and the moon passed slowly over the face of the sun from north to south. The landscape began to darken, the cows began to wend their way home from the town pastures, and the chickens started to roost.

Venus soon came out a little way from the sun and the moon. Then,

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one by one, the stars appeared. Suddenly, at 5:15½ p.m., the peak of occultation occurred. The moon stood out black and distinct, surrounded by an aurora of surpassing beauty. The darkness at this time far exceeded anticipation.

It became necessary to light the gas lights 15 minutes before the total obscuration. The mercury fell, and a cool evening breeze blew from the northwest. The total eclipse lasted exactly two minutes, 20 seconds.

Two weeks before the big event, the local Daily Express reminded its readers of the coming event — "the only total eclipse of the sun since 1834 which could be observed in any considerable portion of our country, and no other total eclipse

will be visible over the northern part of this continent."

About a week before the event, the Indianapolis Journal suggested that since Terre Haute was to be in the belt of total observation, an excursion here and return after dark would be entertaining and educational. About 23 out of 24 parts of the sun's disc was to be blacked out here, an almost perfect situation.

The local editor reassured readers that they should not fear that the eclipse would cause a freeze or vegetation would be nipped by frost. He said, "Any chilliness is quite imaginary."

On Aug. 5, the Daily Express stated: "This eclipse will be total nearly the entire length of southern Indiana. As it passes out of the State, its western limit will be a little below Evansville, and its eastern limit near Lawrenceburg.

"The center of the shadow will pass to the south of Terre Haute, but the totality at this point will exist for a period of two minutes and 18 seconds."

The Almanac of 1869 stated: "A total eclipse of the sun is not only one of the most imposing spectacles of nature, but also one of the most imposing astronomical

phenomena. Although such an eclipse occurs nearly every year somewhere on earth, yet the area within which it can be observed is so small that it happens to few persons to witness one in the course of a lifetime. There have been only two that were visible in any large part of the United States since the beginning of the present century, namely, those of 1806 and 1834. . . ."

Telegraph reports told how fine weather brought out thousands of persons who stood in the street with their smoked glasses to view the once-in-a-lifetime event.

An account found in an old diary told how the temperature dropped from 102 degrees to 60 degrees. This rapid fall recorded here began as soon as the eclipse began and fell 40 degrees in one hour.

Local spectators noted two prominent sun spots, and confirmed the shape of the moon as round and hanging in the sky between earth and sun.

A century later, three earth people confirmed this fact again when they went up to see the moon from a closer vantage point than the cupola on the roof of St. Anthony's Hospital.

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Hot times in Wabash Valley

Farmers wanted more water in summer of 1869

Is AUG 25 1991

Following the Civil War, in the summer of 1869, there had never been more water in the Wabash River, and yet the farmers and gardeners wanted more water. Wild blackberries were plentiful and watermelons were flooding the markets. Good butter was scarce, however.

A new state law made it imperative for farmers to cut down and destroy thistles, nettles and other noxious weeds growing along the roads in front of their land. Is this law still on the books?

On the shooting grounds in the northeast suburbs of the city, there was a shooting match planned for a Sunday afternoon between Messrs. Sibley and Schaal. The purse was \$100, but the newspaper did not print any mention of it later, so who was the winner?

George M. Early, a resident of Terre Haute, was appointed clerk of the Southern Penitentiary. Another local resident, Daniel Dietz, was sent to the penitentiary from Clay County for cutting his wife's throat. He was promptly installed as butcher for the prison.

Col. Shuler bought the sheep and cattle for that institution, and had them slaughtered in the prison.

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This saved a considerable amount of money for the state.

Horse racing was being investigated by the grand jury that summer. The Rev. Campbell of New York was to preach at the Universalist Church, at the corner of Eighth and Mulberry streets, on Sunday morning and again in the evening at 8.

Readers were urged "to go to W.H. Sage's for a delicious beverage. His elegant Marble Fount is in fine order..."

An outdoor show attracted a lot of attention that July, 122 years ago. "A couple of Italians with an organ, two dogs and a remarkably

well-trained monkey created quite a sensation upon the streets last evening, drawing large crowds of men, boys and girls, where ever they exhibited their unique performance." The housewives must have stayed indoors.

In front of Jones & Jones' agricultural implement house, on the east side of the public square, it looked as if a circus had come to town. It seems a shipment of bright-red threshing machines had just arrived, and four had been sold that day. It paid to advertise in 1869.

Customers were invited to "call at Moudy's Cigar Store and buy one or more of his Velocipede Cigars."

At Hayward & Ryan's auction rooms on Fourth Street, near the corner of Ohio Street, there was an auction of "furniture of all kinds, beds, bedsteads, chairs, wardrobes, cook stoves, Queensware, etc."

There was a change in one of the early business firms here. The original Hoop Skirt Factory, established by Mr. B. Weisz, was purchased by Herz & Arnold, and removed from No. 12 South Fourth to No. 89 Main St., between Third and Fourth.

According to the Daily Express,

there was no better place in this state to buy skirts, corsets, ladies furnishings and fancy goods, than Herz & Arnold's Skirt Factory..."

In the personal column, Mr. Weisz was reported to be in town from his new residence in St. Joseph, Mo. He was passing through on his way to the east coast. His original skirt factory was located at 159 Main St., between Fifth and Sixth streets.

Readers must remember that the Philadelphia system of street and house numbers would not be instituted for several years yet. His location was what would be the 500 block on Main Street.

With the tomato picking season coming on, the editor warned pickers about the large, light-green worms, about three inches long, infesting the vines. It seems a servant girl in Illinois was gathering tomatoes when she was stung by one of these ugly worms.

It felt like a bee sting, according to the report. In a short time, the poison penetrated every part of her system, and she was thrown in spasms which ended in death.

It surely was a long, hot summer that year of 1869.

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